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ABSTRACT

This report presents results of a process analysis that describes and documents Job Corps services and operations. Chapter one provides overviews of Job Corps, the national Job Corps study, and the process analysis. Chapter two describes the administrative structure of Job Corps and presents data on the geographic distribution and characteristics of key operating components. Chapters three to nine focus on these components of Job Corps: outreach and admissions, including counseling; vocational education, including occupational exploration program, vocational skills training projects, work experience program, and advanced training; academic education; residential living and health services, including student government and leadership and behavior management; center administration related to staffing and safety/security; organization and provision of Job Corps' placement services; and Job Corps performance management system and how it affects center operations. Chapter ten offers conclusions. Appendixes include data collection design and implementation and supplementary tables. (YLB)

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U.S. Department of Labor
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National Job Corps:
Report on the Process Analysis

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration

Employment and Training Administration
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National Job Corps Study: Report on the Process Analysis

February 26, 1999

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PREFACE

This report is the first of a series of reports on the National Job Corps Study. The report provides a description of the Job Corps Program model and how it was operating in 1996. Thus, it describes the context in which the evaluation was conducted. It should be noted that many of the issues raised in the process analysis are being addressed as Job Corps implements the new Workforce Investment Act. Nevertheless, the report should inform and educate policy makers and practitioners about the Job Corps program model.

The authors of this report are: Terry Johnson, Mark Gritz, Carol Boussy, Jan Leonard and Carlyn Owens of Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers; Russell Jackson of Decision Information Resources, Inc.; and John Burghardt of Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. The Department of Labor project officer for the evaluation is Daniel Ryan.

The National Job Corps Study is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. of Princeton, New Jersey under Department of Labor Contract No. K-4279-3-00-80-30. Contractors conducting research and evaluation projects under Federal sponsorship are encouraged to express their judgment freely. Therefore, this report does not necessarily represent the official opinion of the Department of Labor.

The next report will detail employment and earnings of Job Corps students and controls during the 30 months following random assignment. A subsequent report will describe the benefits and costs of the program at 48 months after random assignment. A conclusive assessment of Job Corps' effectiveness will not be available until the 48-month report is completed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Job Corps Study is an ongoing, collaborative effort, involving the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Policy and Research, the Office of Job Corps, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Battelle Memorial Institute, and Decision Information Resources, Inc. Many individuals from these organizations made valuable contributions to this process analysis report.

The authors are especially indebted to the many Job Corps staff at the national, regional, and local agency level who provided the underlying information for this report. These staff include the center directors and staff at 23 Job Corps centers visited who gave us valuable insights on center operations and the services provided to students; all center directors nationwide and their staff who contributed to completing the center mail survey; the OA&P managers who responded to the telephone survey on activities; and the nearly 500 OA counselors who participated in the telephone survey on the practices they follow in recruiting and screening students for the program. They also include the nine regional directors and other regional office staff who made our data collection efforts easier and provided valuable insights on the role of the regional office in Job Corps. We are also grateful for the assistance of the Job Corps Data Center for providing Student Pay, Allotment, and Management Information System (SPAMIS) data used in the process analysis.

In designing the protocols for the site visits and for the telephone interviews, we benefited greatly from early discussions with staff in Region 10. We would especially like to thank Jack Krois, Pat Putnims, and Ernie Priestley for the many hours they spent helping us better understand the Job Corps program as we designed our protocols. We would also like to thank the centers and agencies that we visited to pretest our draft protocols, including Cascades Job Corps Center, Angell Job Corps Center, Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, Washington Del-Jen, and MTC Oregon Placement.

The authors also wish to acknowledge the DOL and Job Corps National Office staff who contributed to the process study. We appreciate the support and guidance of Daniel Ryan and David Lah throughout the project and thank them for their review of earlier drafts of the process report. We would also like to thank Peter Rell, former Job Corps National Director, for his strong support of the study, which initially established a cooperative atmosphere between the research team and the Job Corps community. This collaborative environment has continued under the leadership of Mary Silva, current Job Corps National Director. Mary and the members of her management team, including Bob Sabochick, Flora Richardson, Tim Sullivan, and Jenny Gallo, met with the research team conducting the process analysis on several occasions, reviewed preliminary drafts of the report, and made valuable contributions to the report. National Office staff also provided important data sources for the study, including information on vocational slots by center and monthly data about center on-board strength.

We are particularly grateful for the contributions of research team members who spent long days and weeks visiting many Job Corps centers. In addition to the authors, these include Carla Prince of DIR, Alicia Meckstroth, Sheena McConnell, and Peter Schochet of MPR, and Jerry Herting, Pat Lesho, Christopher Lyu, Betsy Payn, and Sue Pearce of Battelle. We would also like to thank Debra

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Finally, we would like to thank the MPR staff who were responsible for producing this report. This includes Walter Brower and Patricia Ciaccio, who provided valuable editorial assistance, and Jill Miller, who did an excellent job of producing this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a process study of Job Corps operations. The study was conducted as part of the National Job Corps Study, whose purpose is to measure the effects of Job Corps participation on students' post-program earnings and related outcomes. In support of this broad goal, the process study describes and documents program services and operations. Data for the process study were collected during calendar year 1996 through a telephone survey of Job Corps outreach and admissions (OA) counselors, a mail survey of all Job Corps centers, and visits to 23 centers for interviews with staff, observations of activities, and focus group discussions with students and staff.

We conclude from the process analysis that Job Corps uses a well-developed program model and that the program is well implemented. If the net impact study finds positive net impacts or net impact for some groups of students but not others, the process study information summarized here will help us to understand how this occurs. If the net impact study finds no positive impacts, the findings of the process study allow us to rule out failure in implementing the planned model as a reason. Job Corps students are receiving substantial, meaningful education and training services. Whether the program has positive impacts on students outcomes relative to all the other education and training opportunities available to the youth who apply remains an open question that the forthcoming impact study will answer.

Below we highlight some key findings of the process study.

OVERVIEW

Job Corps is an intensive and comprehensive program whose goal is to help disadvantaged youth between the ages of 16 and 24 become more responsible, employable, and productive citizens. The program's major service components include academic education, vocational training, residential living, health care and health education, counseling, and job placement assistance. At the time of the study, these comprehensive services were delivered at 110 Job Corps centers nationwide, through a program structure that unites federal agencies, private contractors, and national unions and businesses. Thirty centers were operated by agencies of the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and of the Interior under interagency agreements with the U.S. Department of Labor; the other 80 were operated by private contractors under contract with Job Corps regional offices. Currently, 116 centers provide Job Corps training. Most Job Corps students reside at the Job Corps center while training, although about 12 percent are nonresidential students who reside at home. A variety of public and private entities conduct outreach and screening of new students and help graduating students to find jobs or further education. Federal staff in the Job Corps National Office provide programmatic and policy guidance; federal staff in the Job Corps regional offices contract for and directly oversee provision of services.

Developed and refined over a 30-year period, Job Corps has a number of distinctive characteristics: a high degree of uniformity in program form and content; a high degree of federal direction; continuity, especially in center operations (where in many cases the same contractor has been operating the center for decades); and career paths for Job Corps staff that have attracted a large number of committed, long-term staff. Job Corps is performance driven; heavy emphasis is placed on a contractor's report card in awarding competitive contracts. The program's performance measurement system has successfully focused managers and staff on achieving specific student outcomes.

The three program areas--outreach and admissions, center operations, and placement--are integral to the Job Corps model, but center operations are the heart of the program. Next, we highlight key study findings on operations in each area.

OUTREACH AND ADMISSIONS

As of July 1996, 86 OA contractors operated throughout the United States in more than 500 offices, employing approximately 900 to 1,000 OA counselors. OA services are provided by three main types of contractors: (1) State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) and other state and local agencies, (2) private organizations affiliated with a Job Corps center, and (3) private organizations not affiliated with centers.

OA activities encompass outreach, eligibility screening, and admissions counseling. OA counselors are predominantly females who are salaried, full-time employees. Average tenure of OA counselors is short, and few have prior Job Corps experience.

OA counselors devote considerable time to outreach activities. Some of this involves contacts with youths and parents through home visits, public events, or contacts initiated by the public. To reach a wider audience of potentially eligible youth and parents, OA counselors develop and maintain relationships with other agencies and community organizations that serve youth. Although OA counselors undertake considerable outreach, they view word of mouth and advertising as the most effective methods of making youths aware of Job Corps.

To be eligible for Job Corps, youth must satisfy criteria related to age, selective service registration, residency, family income, need for additional training/education, environment, health history, behavior adjustment history, child care, parental consent, and capability and aspirations to participate. Eligibility assessment and determination primarily screens into the program youth who meet the "traditional," easily documentable eligibility criteria related to age, U.S. citizenship, income, and so forth. While OA staff confer with applicants whose qualifications on the harder-to-document criteria of aspirations and capacity to benefit appear questionable, very few youth who otherwise are eligible and persist in their intention to enroll are found ineligible.

OA counselors have limited firsthand knowledge of the centers for which they recruit. They have recently visited only a few of the centers their applicants will attend, and most indicate that they have not received up-to-date information from the centers. Center staff complain that many students arrive on center without a good idea of what to expect and what the specific center offers.

CENTER OPERATIONS

Vocational Training

The vocational training program provides job-specific skills in a trade that will allow each student to secure a job or qualify for advanced training upon completion. From its inception, Job Corps has followed a distinctive open-entry, open-exit educational philosophy in its vocational and academic programs. Instruction is individualized and self-paced; students enter with differing levels of preparation, progress at their own pace, and leave when they have achieved an appropriate level of mastery. The Job Corps vocational program emphasizes competency-based instruction that uses curricula developed with input from business and labor organizations.

In addition to classroom-based instruction, Job Corps provides students with workplace learning experiences through Vocational Skills Training (VST) projects and Work Experience Programs (WEPs). Job Corps' VST projects provide students with the opportunity to learn occupational competencies while performing the types of activities they are expected to perform on a job. VST projects involve students in occupationally relevant activities that improve centers' facilities--such as building a new structure, renovating existing structures, or painting buildings--or that assist community-based organizations in similar activities. WEPs are the culmination of students' vocational training in many areas where they do not have an opportunity to participate in a VST project. A WEP places a student in an unpaid position with a local employer for six weeks; during this time, the student performs duties related to his or her area of training in a workplace setting.

Job Corps offers training programs in more than 75 vocational areas; however, the largest 10 trades--clerical occupations, health occupations, carpentry, masonry, building and apartment maintenance, food service, auto/truck mechanic, welding, painter, and electrician--account for 80 percent of all training slots. To broaden the range of programs offered on centers, many centers in urban areas contract with local training providers to allow Job Corps students to participate in outside programs.

Job Corps attaches importance to ensuring that students are trained in jobs for which demand for workers exists. Projected annual openings are expected to be very high in the two largest vocational areas: clerical occupations (nearly 300,000 openings per year), and health occupations (about 120,000 openings per year). Furthermore, Job Corps has the capacity to train only a small fraction of these annual totals. Together these trades account for about one-third of training offered. In contrast, the number of annual openings in welding, carpentry, and masonry will be in the range of 10,000 to 30,000, and Job Corps' current capacity will provide large fractions of the new workers in these areas.

Job Corps adjusts its trade offerings to shifts in employers' demands for workers very slowly. Centers monitor placement rates and other indicators that training is meeting employer needs. They also consult with local employers to anticipate demand. Training capacity in current Job Corps trades that are not performing well can be reduced or eliminated fairly easily. Capacity in trades that perform well can be expanded. However, adjustments in the form of opening new trades that have not previously been offered are very gradual. Centers proposing to start offering new trades must demonstrate that a labor market for workers exists and that training can be provided cost-effectively.

Regional office and National Office staff must approve all adjustments in capacity, especially starting a new trade, and recent experience of the centers we visited indicates that changes are made very gradually.

Academic Education

Students typically enter Jobs Corps with substantial deficits in their literacy and numeracy skills. Only 20 percent have a high school diploma or GED at entry, and only 40 percent (including the graduates) read at a level that qualifies them for enrollment in a GED preparation course. The Job Corps academic program is designed to alleviate these deficits.

Job Corps' Computer Managed Instruction (CMI) system provides uniform curriculum and program delivery of the major academic courses--reading, math, and writing/thinking skills--across centers. CMI is integral to instruction and student assessment. While instructors have flexibility in instructional approaches, the Job Corps curriculum and CMI dictate the content of instruction almost entirely. Supplemental courses or approaches are implemented at some centers, based on available resources and assessment of student needs, skills, and requirements.

Residential Living and Health Services

Residential living is one of the most distinctive programmatic components of Job Corps. Since most students reside at the center, the program design has many features that seek to make the residential living experience pleasant, productive, and supportive of the vocational training and academic education. Consequently, residential living encompasses a wide range of program elements, including new student orientation, residential support services, counseling, social skills development, evaluation of student progress, intergroup relations, recreation, student government and leadership, and behavior management. A closely related component is provision of health services.

Residential advisors (RAs) and counselors are the key residential support staff. RAs, who oversee dormitory life, have more one-on-one contact than any other staff because they interact with students where they live. They serve as mentors and surrogate parents for youth, many of whom are living away from home among strangers for the first time. Their job duties also include providing social skills training and often helping students conduct other formal group activities. Counselors serve as advocates for students, helping them to resolve scheduling conflicts, problems with their classes, and personal difficulties. Counselors' caseloads range from 60 to 80 students.

Nonresidential students have a very different Job Corps program experience than students who live on center. Approximately 12 percent of Job Corps students are nonresidential students. They attend vocational training and academic education classes and are encouraged to participate in other parts of center life. However, the participation of many nonresidential students in activities outside of classes is limited, often because of family responsibilities. Most residential support services (except dormitory life) are available to nonresidential students. Special nonresidential counselors help these students resolve child care, transportation, and income support problems in addition to the full range of issues that counselors address with residential students.

The social skills training (SST) program seeks to improve life skills (accepting criticism, getting along with peers and supervisors) necessary to successful employment. While SST is widely acknowledged as very beneficial to students, many staff we spoke to cited a need for improving the curriculum and improving the training of the RAs who conduct most SST sessions. (Since our site visits, the curriculum has been revised extensively.)

Progress and Performance Evaluation Panels (P/PEPs) are the cornerstone of Job Corps' student evaluation process. The panels are made up of a counselor, a vocational instructor, an academic instructor, and an RA, preferably but not necessarily the staff who work with the individual student. A P/PEP meets with each student periodically to assess progress in each program area and to guide the student in an ongoing process of self-assessment and goal-setting. As part of the assessment process, each student meets with each instructor in preparation for the meeting. Staff and students embrace the P/PEP concept but faulted the amount of time that goes into preparing for and holding the meetings. A few centers have received permission to use Progress and Performance Evaluation Counseling (P/PEC), in which a meeting with the counselor substitutes for the panel meeting but other elements remain unchanged.

While the review process is widely regarded as constructive, the performance bonus system, which grants pay bonuses on the basis of students' P/PEP or P/PEC ratings is viewed as subjective and inequitable. The primary problem is that RAs' ratings of achievement lack consistency across staff members, with the result that students with similar achievement can obtain very different ratings.

Center recreation programs play an important part in occupying students' time outside the training day. Student government associations provide valuable leadership experiences for students and opportunities to get involved in the center community, but student government seems to have very little influence on center policies or operations.

The behavior management system--a system of privileges earned for good performance and sanctions for poor performance--provides an effective means to encourage positive behaviors among students. All centers must have written rules and sanctions, but many have implemented sophisticated systems in which students can earn privileges (off-center trips, choice dorm rooms). Centers in which all staff were involved in implementing and reinforcing the center's behavior management system were more effective at encouraging positive behaviors and reported fewer problems. The national expanded zero tolerance (ZT) policy for drugs and violence instituted in April 1995 appears to have had a profound positive effect on the behavior management system and on the general climate on center.

Centers provide required health services for students through a combination of center staff and outside contractors. Program regulations require centers to provide physical, dental, and mental health services to all students. Centers employ registered and licensed nurses to staff the center's health facilities and contract with local physicians, dentists, and mental health consultants to provide student physicals, medical care, dental care, and mental health care that goes beyond counseling duties.

PLACEMENT

Placement agencies are responsible for helping former Job Corps students get jobs that will allow them to be self-sufficient or to pursue additional training. They are required to provide placement assistance for a period of six months to all terminating Job Corps students regardless of how long they were enrolled (except fraudulent enrollments and those terminated for ZT infractions). These agencies hold competitively awarded cost-reimbursement contracts administered by the regional offices. Placement contracts are currently held by Job Corps centers, other private for-profit organizations, and SESAs or other state agencies. Most also hold contracts to conduct OA activities.

Placement agency services are limited in scope and substance. Most staff effort is devoted to locating students and to maintaining some minimal level of contact with them over the six-month placement horizon. Placement staff rarely meet with former students in person, and most contact is by telephone, which limits the possibility of providing comprehensive placement services. Many managers suggested that more intensive services could be provided to students who complete the program if placement contractors were relieved of the requirement to serve all students regardless of whether they had had significant exposure to Job Corps.

DEFINITIONS OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
AANJO	average annual number of job openings
ACT	advanced career training
ALMIS	America's Labor Market Information System
ALOS	average-length-of-stay
AODA	alcohol and other drugs of abuse
AT	advanced training
BMS	behavior management system
CAAT	Capability and Aspirations Assessment Tool
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
CCC	Civilian Conservation Center
CIP	Classification of Instructional Programs
CMI	Computer-Managed Instruction
CRB	Center Review Board
CSO	Center Standards Officer
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
DOT	Dictionary of Occupation Titles
EDP	employability development plan
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Educational Development
HEP	health education program
IGR	intergroup relations
JACS	Joint Action in Community Service
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
LEP	limited English proficiency
MAP	Maximizing Academic Potential
NOICC	National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
OA	outreach and admissions
OAOMS	Outreach and Admissions Outcome Measurement System

Definitions of Acronyms *(continued)*

Acronym	Definition
OEP	Occupational Exploration Program
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMS	Outcome Measurement System
P/PEP	Progress/Performance Evaluation Panels
PMS	performance measurement system
POMS	placement outcome measurement system
PRH	Job Corps Policy and Requirements Handbook
PY	Program Year (July 1 of current year to June 30 of next year)
RAs	residential advisors
SAGs	student activity guides
SESAs	State Employment Security Agencies
SPAMIS	Student Pay, Allotment, and Management Information System
SPER	Student Performance Evaluation Record
SST	social skills training
STAR	Social Training Achievement Record
STDs	sexually transmitted diseases
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
TAR	training achievement record
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
VST	Vocational Skills Training
WEP	Work Experience Program
WICS	Women in Community Service
WOW	World of Work
ZT	zero-tolerance

I. INTRODUCTION

Job Corps plays a central role in federal efforts to provide employment assistance to disadvantaged youths. The program's goal is to help disadvantaged youths become "more responsible, employable, and productive citizens" by providing them with comprehensive services that include basic education, vocational skills training, counseling, and residential support. Each year, Job Corps serves more than 60,000 new enrollees and costs more than $1 billion. The National Job Corps Study, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), was designed to provide information about the effectiveness of Job Corps in attaining its goal.[1]

The study consists of three major components: (1) an impact analysis, (2) a process analysis, and (3) a benefit-cost analysis. This report presents the results of the process analysis, which describes the key elements of the Job Corps program model and documents how they were implemented at the time the study was conducted. The process analysis provides important contextual information that will complement the impact and benefit-cost analyses and support efforts to improve Job Corps operations. Moreover, some of the data collected for the process study will be used directly in the impact and benefit-cost analyses. In addition to meeting these basic study objectives, the information about the strengths and weaknesses in Job Corps operations will be useful to the Job Corps community and to others operating programs that provide education and training for disadvantaged out-of-school youth.

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[1] The study is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) and its subcontractors, Battelle Memorial Institute and Decision Information Resources.

A. OVERVIEW OF JOB CORPS

The Job Corps program, established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, currently operates under provisions of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982. The operational structure of Job Corps is complex, with multiple levels of administrative accountability, several distinct program components, and numerous contractors and subcontractors. DOL administers Job Corps through a national office and nine regional offices. The national office establishes policy and requirements, develops curricula, and oversees major program initiatives. The regional offices procure and administer contracts and perform oversight activities, such as reviews of center performance.

Through its regional offices, DOL uses a competitive bidding process to contract out center operations, recruiting and screening of new students, and placement of students into jobs and other educational opportunities after they leave the program. At the time of the study, 80 centers were operated under such contracts. In addition, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and of the Interior operated 30 centers, called Civilian Conservation Centers (CCCs), under interagency agreements with DOL.[2] Next, we briefly outline the roles of the three main program elements.

1. Outreach and Admissions

Recruitment and screening for Job Corps are conducted by outreach and admissions (OA) agencies, which include private nonprofit firms, private for-profit firms, state employment agencies, and the centers themselves. These agencies provide information to the public through outreach activities (for example, by placing advertisements and making presentations at schools), screen youths to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria, assign youths to centers (when the regional office delegates this function), and arrange for transportation to centers.

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[2] Currently, 88 contract centers and 28 CCCs are providing Job Corps training.

2. Job Corps Center Services

Job Corps is a comprehensive and intensive program. Its major components include basic education, vocational training, residential living (including training in social skills), health care and education, counseling, and job placement assistance. Services in each of these components are tailored to each participant.

Education. The goal of the education component is to enable students to learn as fast as their individual abilities permit. Education programs in Job Corps are individualized and self-paced and operate on an open-entry and open-exit basis. The programs include remedial education (emphasizing reading and mathematics), world of work (including consumer education), driver education, home and family living, health education, programs designed for those whose primary language is not English, and a General Educational Development (GED) program of high school equivalency for students who are academically qualified. About one-fourth of the centers can grant state-recognized high school diplomas.

Vocational Training. As with the education component, the vocational training programs at Job Corps are individualized and self-paced and operate on an open-entry and open-exit basis. Each Job Corps center offers training in several vocations, typically including business and clerical, health, construction, culinary arts, and building and apartment maintenance. National labor and business organizations provide vocational training at many centers.

Residential Living. Residential living is the component that distinguishes Job Corps from other publicly funded employment and training programs. The idea behind residential living is that, because most participants come from disadvantaged environments, they require new and more supportive surroundings to derive the maximum benefits from education and vocational training. All students must participate in formal social skills training. The residential living component also includes meals, dormitory life, entertainment, sports and recreation, center government, center maintenance, and other related activities. Historically, regulations had limited the number of nonresidential students to 10 percent, but JTPA amendments raised that limit to 20 percent in July 1993.

Health Care and Education. Job Corps centers offer comprehensive health services to both residential and nonresidential students. Services include medical examinations and treatment; biochemical tests for drug use, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy; immunizations; dental examinations and treatment; counseling for emotional and other mental health problems; and instruction in basic hygiene, preventive medicine, and self-care.

Counseling and Other Ancillary Services. Job Corps centers provide counselors and residential advisers. These staff help students plan their educational and vocational curricula, offer motivation, and create a supportive environment. Support services are also provided during recruitment, placement, and the transition to regular life and jobs.

3. Placement

The final step in the Job Corps program is placement, which helps students find jobs in training-related occupations with prospects for long-term employment and advancement. Placement contractors may be state employment offices or private contractors, and sometimes the centers themselves perform placement activities. Placement agencies help students find jobs by providing assistance with interviewing and resume writing and services for job development and referral. They are also responsible for distributing the readjustment allowance, a stipend students receive after leaving Job Corps.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL JOB CORPS STUDY

The study addresses five major research questions:

1. How effective is Job Corps overall at improving the employability of disadvantaged youth?
2. Is Job Corps more effective or less effective for certain segments of the eligible population?
3. What is the Job Corps program "model," and how is this model implemented in practice?
4. What components of Job Corps (such as residential and nonresidential services and contract centers and CCCs) are particularly effective?
5. Is Job Corps cost-effective?

To address these questions, the study consists of an impact analysis, a process analysis, and a benefit-cost analysis. In this section, we briefly describe the impact and benefit-cost analyses as context for discussing the objectives and design of the process study.

1. Impact Analysis

The purpose of the impact analysis is to estimate the net effect of Job Corps on participants' post-program earnings and other employment-related outcomes (question 1). To address this objective, we created a control group by randomly selecting, between November 1994 and February 1996, approximately 6,000 Job Corps-eligible applicants who resided in the contiguous 48 states and the District of Columbia and who had not previously attended Job Corps. For three years, control group members are not permitted to enroll in Job Corps, although they are able to enroll in other programs available to them. The control sample was selected from among all new, eligible applicants nationwide. During the same 16-month period, about 9,500 eligible applicants assigned to Job Corps were selected for the research sample as members of the program group.

The impact study will examine five outcome measures: (1) employment and earnings; (2) education and training; (3) dependence on welfare and other public transfers; (4) antisocial behavior, such as arrests, crimes committed by and against sample members, and alcohol and drug use; and (5) family formation and childbearing. We will obtain data on outcomes from interviews conducted with sample members at intake (as soon as possible after random assignment), and at 12, 30, and 48 months after intake. Interviews will be conducted by telephone, with in-person followup of sample members who could not be interviewed by telephone. We will also use data on earnings employers report for Unemployment Insurance and Social Security.

To address the second research question, we will estimate impacts for subgroups of youths, defined by the following characteristics (measured at the time of application): age, gender, educational attainment, parental status, employment experiences, participation in welfare programs, and previous involvement with the law.

To estimate the impacts of the Job Corps residential component (question 4), we will compare the experiences of program and control group youth who, before random assignment, were expected to be assigned to a residential slot. We will do the same for the nonresidential component. Variations in net impacts according to center attributes (for example, CCC or contract center, measured performance, and center size) will be obtained in a similar manner. Measurements of the impacts of other components (for example, specific occupational training courses and duration of stay in Job Corps) will rely on statistical models of the process by which students are assigned to these components.

2. Benefit-Cost Analysis

The primary purpose of the benefit-cost analysis is to assess whether the benefits of Job Corps justify the substantial investment of public resources. The benefit-cost analysis provides a unified, consistent framework for weighing the many potential benefits and costs of the program, including those that cannot be measured in dollars. By examining costs from the perspective of participants, nonparticipants, and the government, as well as from that of society as a whole, the analysis provides information about how the benefits of Job Corps and its costs are distributed.

The most important benefits that will be valued are:

- Increased output that may result from the additional employment and productivity of youth who have participated in Job Corps
- Increased output produced by the youth while in Job Corps
- Reduced criminal activity
- Reduced use of other services and programs, including welfare and other education and training programs

Other benefits to society that are difficult to appraise monetarily include improvements in participants' quality of life, self-esteem, health, and social skills, as well as reduction in crimes committed against participants. These benefits will be considered qualitatively.

The most important costs of Job Corps include the following:

- Program operating costs
- Opportunity cost of attending Job Corps (primarily the earnings forgone while the student attends Job Corps)

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROCESS ANALYSIS

The research question concerning the Job Corps model and its implementation establishes three objectives for the process analysis component of the evaluation:

1. To document the nature of the Job Corps program model, describe the important program elements, and show how these elements are designed to achieve overall program goals
2. To assess implementation of the Job Corps program model and to determine which program elements work well and which create operational bottlenecks
3. To identify important variations across centers and agencies in program elements that could affect student outcomes

As indicated earlier, the key elements of the program model are OA, Job Corps center operations, and placement. OA maintains a flow of youths who are eligible for and can benefit from Job Corps. Center operations, the cornerstone of the program model, include key program elements related to academic education, vocational training, residential living, health services, termination/placement services, and administration/management. Placement activities assist participants in finding jobs and returning to their communities. These program elements are generally under the purview of the Job Corps National Office, a regional office, or one of three other organizations that operate the Job Corps program: (1) OA contractors, (2) Job Corps center contractors, or (3) placement contractors.

Describing the Job Corps program model and assessing its implementation are critical to the overall evaluation. They support the impact and benefit-cost studies and contribute to insights that can improve education and training programs for disadvantaged youths. In particular, if the net impact and benefit-cost analyses show that Job Corps produces significant improvements in employment and related outcomes and is cost-effective, policymakers and the public will want to know why the program was successful. Similarly, if the impact study finds that Job Corps produces little or no benefit for participants, researchers will need to offer explanations. For example, if the population served was able to do well without Job Corps, was it because weaknesses in the program model caused it to fail to meet its objective, or was it because current implementation is weak? Whether impact findings are positive or negative, the process analysis will play a critical role in explaining them. The process study also will help program managers refine the Job Corps model and develop from it other programs for at-risk youths.

Identifying variations across agencies and centers in program elements that could affect student outcomes will play a significant role in the component and subgroup impact analyses. For example, data on the amount and types of information that screeners provide to Job Corps applicants will help us determine whether variations in the information affect the impact that Job Corps has on enrollees. Analysis of the impact of Job Corps on enrollees with different durations of stay in the program will use the data on various center characteristics, including recreational activities and other aspects of center life. In particular, the data collected will help us to determine whether observed variations in OA practices, center characteristics, and placement activities affect key student outcomes, such as enrollment, vocational choices, retention in the program, and post-program behaviors.

D. DESIGN AND DATA SOURCES FOR THE PROCESS ANALYSIS

To meet the objectives of the process analysis, we undertook four data collection activities:

1. A telephone survey of a large sample of OA counselors nationwide
2. In-depth site visits to a sample of 23 Job Corps centers and interviews with managers of OA and placement agencies that serve these centers[3]

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[3] The design also included visits with staff in each regional office to gain understanding of the role of the regional office and of the contextual environment in each region. Information from these (continued...)

3. A mail survey of Job Corps centers

4. Extraction of data from automated Job Corps administrative records on student characteristics and program experiences

1. Telephone Survey of OA Counselors

The telephone survey of OA counselors collected data for four purposes:

1. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the practices OA counselors follow in recruiting and screening students for Job Corps
2. To document how implementation of strict zero tolerance policies related to drugs, alcohol, and violence in early 1995 affected the recruitment and screening process
3. To identify any effects of random selection on the OA process
4. To develop variables for the subgroup impact analysis that will assess whether specific OA practices affect either the likelihood that eligible applicants enroll in, and stay in, Job Corps or the net impacts of the program

The OA telephone survey included all OA agency offices nationwide that were operating during that period of intake for the impact evaluation. In November 1995, we identified 556 distinct OA offices that recruited program or control group members for the National Job Corps Study. Since these offices represented approximately 1,000 OA counselors, we then randomly selected one program member from each office and included in the survey sample the OA counselor who recruited that youth. Telephone interviews were conducted from Battelle between December 1995 and March 1996. We completed interviews with 463 OA counselors, who accounted for 536 of the 556 sampled office identification codes.[4]

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[3](...continued)
visits provided confirmation of general Job Corps policies and procedures. Additional insights concerning operational issues are incorporated into the discussion in the appropriate chapters.

[4] Only 463 interviews were completed for 536 unique office identification codes, because some (continued...)

2. Center Visits and Interviews with Linked OA and Placement Agencies

Center visits were conducted by two-person teams who remained at the center for three to five days. Data were collected through (1) interviews with the center director, senior management staff, academic teachers, vocational instructors, counselors, residential advisers, recreation staff, and health services staff; (2) focus group meetings with center staff and with students at different stages of the program; (3) observations of center activities, such as arrival of new students, orientation sessions, academic classes, vocational classes, social skills training sessions, Progress/Performance Evaluation Panels (P/PEP), student government meetings, center review boards, and center staff meetings; (4) value of output studies; and (5) administration of cost data protocols for the benefit-cost analysis.[5] Center visits were conducted throughout 1996 and one visit was conducted in January 1997.

Centers were selected for site visits through stratified random sampling.[6] Centers were separated into three groups based on the type of center contractor and the extent to which the center serves nonresidential students:

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[4](...continued)
OA counselors work in multiple office locations. In this circumstance, we asked questions concerning specific recruitment areas multiple times, but other questions only once (see Appendix A).

[5] For additional information on the design and implementation of the data collection plan for the value of output component of the site visit, see McConnell (1998).

[6] All centers in the contiguous 48 states that were included in the impact study were candidates. As with the impact study, we excluded centers in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, as well as two centers that operated substantially modified programs, Independence and Pivot Job Corps Centers. We also excluded New Orleans JCC and Shreveport JCC beause major construction activity was going on during the data collection period.

1. CCCs
2. Predominantly residential Job Corps centers operated by private contractors
3. Job Corps centers that are operated by private contractors and that serve a significant number of nonresidential students

We classified a center as serving a significant number of nonresidential students if its nonresidential capacity is more than 20 percent of its total capacity. We then allocated the number of site visits to each of the three strata roughly in proportion to the total capacity of each category and used a systematic random sampling procedure to ensure variation in key center characteristics (performance level and size).

To obtain a broader picture of the 23 centers selected for the intensive site visits, we obtained information from OA and placement agencies that serve students from them. For each center selected for a visit, we randomly selected for interview both an OA agency and a linked placement agency. (We selected the agency that recruited a randomly chosen student and the agency that placed another randomly chosen student). We interviewed the OA office manager and the placement contractor office manager, since they are most likely to be familiar both with staff practices at the operational level and with agencywide policies and initiatives.

3. Mail Survey of Job Corps Centers

The mail survey of all Job Corps centers supplemented the detailed qualitative information obtained from the center site visits with summary information about all Job Corps centers. The data collected through this survey provide comparable measures of key center characteristics that will be used in the subgroup and component impact analysis. In particular, the mail survey was designed to collect as much detail as possible on center characteristics that are likely to affect whether a student arrives on center, as well as a student's length of stay, vocational choices, and vocational completion.

The mail survey was distributed during the last quarter of 1995 to directors of all 110 Job Corps centers--including those in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. All center directors completed the mail survey.

E. KEY JOB CORPS POLICY CHANGES DURING THE STUDY

In response to congressional concerns about the operation of the Job Corps program, new policies were instituted in March 1995, which was during the sample intake period for the National Job Corps Study. According to a policy instruction issued by the director of Job Corps to all centers and OA agencies on February 28, 1995, recent oversight hearings held by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee had indicated unacceptable levels of violence and drug abuse on certain Job Corps centers. A new zero-tolerance (ZT) policy was instituted to ensure full and consistent implementation of existing policies for violence and drugs. According to the new ZT policy, students accused of specific acts of violence (possession of a weapon, assault, sexual assault, robbery and extortion, arson, or arrest for a felony) were to be removed from the center immediately and terminated from the program if fact-finding established that they had committed the alleged acts. The ZT policy for drugs calls for the same procedures to be followed for students accused of possession or sale of drugs on center or conviction of a drug offense. In addition, all new students are tested upon enrollment in Job Corps, and those who test positive are given 30 days to become drug free. Even after the 30-day period, all students are subject to testing on suspicion of drug use. Students who are found not to be drug free after the 30-day probationary period are removed from center and terminated from the program. The 30-day probationary period was subsequently extended to 45 days. All applicants must be informed of the ZT policies and sign an agreement to abide by them.

The main new elements of the policies were the rapid removal of offending students and the elimination of any discretion of staff regarding termination. At the time they were implemented, the policies were expected to have far-reaching effects on outreach and admissions and the quality of life on centers. In the short term, the policy changes caused some disruptions to the flow of students into the program and reduced capacity utilization. The effects of the new ZT policies on center operations are described in this report.

II. JOB CORPS ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Job Corps provides education and training opportunities for youth nationwide, and the centers are the heart of the program. Yet center operations are supported by a distinct administrative structure that encompasses many elements and diverse entities. State and federal agencies, private for-profit organizations, private nonprofit organizations, and national unions all play significant roles. This chapter describes the administrative structure of Job Corps and presents data on the geographic distribution and characteristics of the key operating components: OA agencies, centers, and placement agencies.

A. NATIONAL OFFICE AND REGIONAL OFFICES

The National Office of Job Corps provides leadership, program policy direction, and guidance for administration and operation. To carry out this mission, the National Office must establish goals and objectives for all program components; coordinate Civilian Conservation Center (CCC) operations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI); recommend funding levels for all components; establish national performance standards; conduct program analyses and reviews; award and administer national contracts for public relations, vocational training, student support, health services, and related activities; oversee the regional offices; and develop and modify specific programs and curricula. In addition, the National Office maintains liaisons and coordinates activities with other government agencies, including other offices in the Employment and Training Administration.

The National Office administers contracts with several unions under which union members work with center directors and staff to provide vocational training at selected centers across the country. The unions currently holding national contracts include the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and

Joiners of America, the International Masonry Institute, the National Plasterers and Cement Masons International Association, the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades, the United Auto Workers, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Home Builders Institute, the Transportation-Communication International Union, and the Appalachian Council of the AFL/CIO.

Program and curriculum development efforts of the National Office generally involve collaboration with knowledgeable staff and stakeholders throughout the Job Corps program. The National Office forms work groups made up of staff at all levels in the system and charged with conducting the development work. This process is designed to ensure that program development is responsive to National Office and congressional priorities while taking full advantage of the knowledge that experienced staff can offer. (We illustrate this process in the chapters on vocational training and residential living.)

Within guidelines established by the National Office, the regional offices oversee all program operations in their respective regions. They negotiate, award, and administer OA, center, and placement contracts; monitor and coordinate working relationships among the various contractors; monitor contractors' financial operations; and monitor the performance of the centers. The regional offices also develop policies and standards for all Job Corps operations in the region, such as policies to assign applicants to particular centers. Finally, the regional offices coordinate activities with other regions and the National Office.

B. OUTREACH AND ADMISSIONS (OA)

OA agencies provide information about Job Corps, identify and screen candidates, and facilitate enrollment of eligible youths who decide to attend. Diverse organizations conduct OA activities under contract with the regional office. OA contractors include State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs), other state and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit firms, some of which also operate Job Corps centers. OA contracts specify the contract goal--the number of students that a contractor is to recruit during a program year by gender and residential or nonresidential status--and the geographic area for recruitment. The financial terms of contracts have varied over time and across regions. Currently, all OA contracts provide for reimbursement of costs.[1] In a few regions, governmental and nonprofit agencies recruit students under less formal, unpaid arrangements.

Historically, SESAs were the primary providers of OA services. As recently as the early 1990s, SESAs were still responsible for recruiting more students into Job Corps than was any other type of agency. Over the past few years, Job Corps has shifted increasingly toward using private contractors and Job Corps center operators to perform the OA function.

In June 1996, 86 OA contractors were operating throughout the nine regions (Table II.1). SESAs held 14 of the contracts (16 percent) and recruited 29 percent of students. The other 72 contracts were divided equally between Job Corps centers and private contractors, although private contractors recruited a higher proportion of students (41 percent versus 30 percent recruited by centers).

Regions differ markedly in their reliance on the types of agencies, with several regions relying primarily on one kind (Appendix Table B.1). For example, center operators recruit most applicants in Region 1 (100 percent) and Region 2 (71 percent). Private noncenter agencies recruit most students in Region 3 (77 percent), Region 5 (80 percent), and Region 10 (80 percent). The other regions rely on a mix of agencies; although in each region one type of agency recruits just over half of eligible applicants: SESAs in Regions 4 and 6, private agencies in Region 7/8, and centers in Region 9.

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[1] Job Corps has used contracts that provide for a fixed payment for each student who enrolls.

TABLE II.1

NUMBER OF AGENCIES AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECRUITED, BY AGENCY TYPE OF OA CONTRACTOR

Type of Contractor	Number of Agencies	Percentage of Students Nationwide
SESAs and Other State Agencies	14	29
Job Corps Centers	35	30
Private	37	41
Total	86	100

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

The infrastructure of local OA offices and counselors they represent is extensive. Although not reported in Table II.1, these 86 contractors have more than 500 offices throughout the nation to recruit potential Job Corps students, with roughly 1,000 counselors overall. Individual OA offices range in size from those with a single OA counselor (the most common type) to those with up to 16 OA counselors.

C. CENTERS

With Job Corps centers located in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, Job Corps serves young men and women throughout the country. In the program year ending June 1996, Job Corps was able to serve just under 40,000 students at any one time. Of the available program slots, 56 percent were designated for males and 44 percent were designated for females (Table II.2). While the program's goal is to serve equal numbers of men and women, it has been difficult to recruit enough women.

Although Job Corps is primarily a residential program, about 12 percent of program slots were designated for nonresidential students, who attend training and other activities at the Job Corps center but reside at home. Job Corps was conceived as an exclusively residential program, designed to remove students from a detrimental home or neighborhood environment. However, in an effort to expand services to a broader range of students with distinct needs, Job Corps introduced nonresidential programs that typically targeted females who had dependent children and would otherwise be unlikely to participate. Historically, nonresidential students have been a small fraction of Job Corps students, reserving no more than 10 percent of all slots. The JTPA Amendments of 1993 increased the proportion of students that may be served in a nonresidential setting from 10 percent to 20 percent. Yet despite the legislative change, the proportion of slots allocated to nonresidential students has increased only slightly.

TABLE II.2

NUMBER OF CENTERS AND CENTER CAPACITY IN PROGRAM YEAR 1995, BY CENTER TYPE

			Contract Centers		
	Total	CCCs	Contract Center Total	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Number of Centers	110	30	80	54	26
Center Capacity in PY 1995	39,366	6,330	33,036	24,300	8,736
Average Capacity per Center	358	211	413	450	336
Percentage of Center Capacity by Type of Student					
Male	56	75	52	56	43
Female	44	25	48	44	57
Residential	88	99	86	96	61
Nonresidential	12	1	14	4	39
Male residential	52	74	48	54	30
Male nonresidential	4	<1	4	1	13
Female residential	36	24	38	41	31
Female nonresidential	8	1	9	3	26

SOURCE: Data are from SPAMIS, On Board Strength Report, Program Year 1995.

Both public and private entities operate Job Corps centers. Of the 110 centers in operation at the time of the mail survey, 30 were CCCs, operated by agencies of USDA and DOI under interagency agreements with DOL. The CCCs accounted for about 6,300 program slots or 16 percent of capacity. Agencies currently operating Job Corps centers are the Forest Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. Until recently, CCCs have experienced very little turnover in administration, as many started in 1965 are still overseen by the same agency 30 years later.[2] Indeed, the average time a CCC has been operated by the same organization is 15 years, compared to just 6 years for contract centers.

Located almost exclusively in rural areas, CCCs typically operate in national forests and parks and on other public lands. Most are inaccessible by public transportation and largely isolated from surrounding communities. The average CCC has considerably fewer students than its privately run counterpart. CCCs serve an average of just over 200 students at a time, while contract centers average over 400 students.

The other 80 centers operating in early 1996, which accounted for 84 percent of capacity, were operated by private contractors under contract with Job Corps' regional offices.[3] Regional offices use a competitive bidding process to select private contractors to operate Job Corps centers in their region. Currently, these contractors include for-profit training organizations, as well as nonprofit entities such as Native American tribal organizations, a university, and a YWCA. Most center contracts are held by regional or national corporations that operate several centers under separate contracts. These centers are monitored by, and are accountable to, their own corporate headquarters, as well as to the Job Corps regional office. Affiliation with a national corporation creates additional administrative relationships and requirements for an individual center. It also offers additional internal sources of training, information, and technical assistance. The competitive contracting process also creates organizational and staff turnover at a center, when a contract is awarded to an organization other than the incumbent contractor.

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[2] In the last few years, however, one CCC (Gateway JCC) was closed and another CCC (Iroquois) has operated under considerably reduced capacity and was transferred to a private contractor.

[3] Since early 1996, two contract centers have closed (Tuskegee JCC in Alabama and Knoxville JCC in Tennessee), eight contract centers have opened (Loring JCC in Maine, Fort Devens JCC in Massachusetts, Connecticut JCC in Connecticut, Memphis JCC in Tennessee, Montgomery JCC in Alabama, Chicago JCC in Illinois, Flint-Genesee JCC in Michigan, and Long Beach JCC in California), one has changed from CCC to contract center operator (Iroquois JCC in New York), and one (which formerly was a satellite of another center) became an independent center (Treasure Island in California), for a net increase of eight contract centers.

Most nonresidential slots are in contract centers. Indeed, 26 contract centers in which at least 20 percent of slots are nonresidential contain about three-fourths of all nonresidential slots. To understand how a significant fraction of nonresidential students might affect operations, the nature of students' program experiences, and ultimately the program's impacts, we will examine separately the operations of centers that are primarily nonresidential and centers that have at least 20 percent of slots reserved for nonresidential students. Overall, these centers with a significant nonresidential capacity contain about 22 percent of program slots. They are located in urban areas, and a majority of slots (57 percent) are reserved for females. Both the urban location of these centers with a significant nonresidential capacity and the percentage of slots dedicated to women are in contrast to the situation with CCCs (which are mainly in rural locations and have only 25 percent of slots allocated to females).

D. PLACEMENT AGENCIES

Placement agencies, the third major component of the Job Corps program, assist former Job Corps students to obtain and maintain employment that will allow them to become self-sufficient. Two types of support are provided: (1) help securing a job or placement in further education, and

(2) help finding community support services or relocation assistance. All former Job Corps students are eligible for these services, regardless of the amount of time they are enrolled in the program or whether they complete any aspect of the program, for a period of six months from the date they terminate their enrollment at a center.[4]

Placement contractors provide the first type of support, under competitively awarded contracts that are administered by the regional offices. These contractors provide a broad range of services to students to assist them in obtaining a job, including the dispensing of information to students while they are still enrolled at a center, job search assistance, direct job referrals, and assistance with enrollment in college, other postsecondary training programs, or the military. In addition, these contractors also are responsible for verifying whether a student meets the criteria for a valid placement and for obtaining information on the wages former students received at the jobs they were placed in.

These contracts for placement services are held by three categories of contractors: (1) Job Corps centers, (2) other private for-profit organizations, and (3) SESAs or other state agencies.

In June 1996, 76 placement contracts were in place nationwide (Table II.3). These included 34 placement contracts held by Job Corps centers, 31 contracts held by other private organizations, and 11 contracts held by SESAs or other state agencies. Substantial variation exists across the regions in the number and types of placement contractors (Appendix Table B.3). For example, Region 4 (which has the largest student capacity) has 15 placement contractors, while Region 1 (which has

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[4] Placement contractors do not provide services to students who were terminated during the 30-day probationary period for drug use or violence or to fraudulent enrollments (students who were determined to be ineligible for the program after enrollment). At the time the study began, Job Corps policy was to terminate services upon initial placement. This policy was revised in Program Year (PY) 1995 to require expanded placement assistance and support for the full six-month eligibility period.

TABLE II.3

NUMBER OF PLACEMENT AGENCIES AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SERVED, BY AGENCY TYPE

	Number of Contracts	Percentage of Students Served
Job Corps Center Operators	34	34
Other Private Organizations	31	48
SESAs	11	18
Total	**76**	**100**

SOURCE: SPAMIS data for Program Year 1995.

the smallest student capacity) has only 3. Moreover, while Regions 6 and 9 heavily use placement contractors that are affiliated with center operators, Regions 1 and 10 do not have any such placement contractors and rely solely on other private organizations. SESAs are used primarily in Regions 4, 6, and 7/8.

Center-affiliated placement contractors generally had smaller operations and provided placement services for fewer students under each contract compared to other private contractors and to the number of students served under contracts awarded to a SESA or other state agency. In terms of the number of students assigned to each placement agency, private placement contractors that were not affiliated with a center provided job placement services to approximately one-half of all Job Corps students. Although center-affiliated contractors hold about 45 percent of the placement contracts, they served only 34 percent of the students. Finally, SESAs and other state agencies holding placement contracts were assigned approximately 18 percent of the terminees during PY 1995.

The second type of support is provided by two contractors who hold sole-source contracts with the National Office to provide support services to former Job Corps students. Specifically, two nonprofit organizations, Women in Community Service (WICS) and Joint Action in Community Service (JACS), provide both pre-termination and post-termination support services to students. The services WICS and JACS provide are designed to help students make the transition into the community after they leave Job Corps and help them obtain and maintain a job. These organizations provide students still enrolled in Job Corps with information about the communities they have chosen to locate in and the types of social services available. After students have left the center, WICS and JACS attempt to contact them to determine what support services they need to be able to succeed in the labor market and to provide referrals to community service providers.

III. OUTREACH AND ADMISSIONS

The primary purpose of the outreach and admissions (OA) component of Job Corps is to ensure a steady flow of eligible young people who can benefit from the program. Operating the program at or near capacity is important so that the resources devoted to it are used to full advantage. Short stays are viewed as wasteful, because the participants derive little benefit if they leave home to attend but then do not complete the program. In this context, the twin challenges for the OA system are (1) ensuring that qualified candidates are ready to enroll when slots become available; and (2) ensuring that these candidates fully understand what is expected of them and what life on center will be like, so as to avoid disappointment and early program termination. Sometimes tension exists between these two objectives.

A. OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION OF OA

OA involves several related activities. Outreach makes young people aware of the opportunities Job Corps offers and gives interested persons the information on which to base a decision to enroll. Screening for eligibility entails determining whether applicants meet several criteria. The eligibility criteria include readily verifiable factors (such as age, income, and citizenship), factors requiring the exercise of judgment (need for removal from the home, capacity to benefit from the program), and factors that may require review by professionally qualified third parties (evidence of serious health or behavioral problems). After they are determined eligible, students are assigned to enroll at a specific center on a particular date. In this final phase of counseling, the OA system prepares candidates for enrollment, arranges transportation, and sees the student off.

Several types of organizations share responsibility for OA, including Job Corps regional offices, OA agencies, and Job Corps centers. Regional offices are responsible for contracting with agencies to perform OA work and for determining eligibility and assigning students to centers, although most regional offices delegate some or all of these decisions to OA agencies and centers. OA agencies play a pivotal role in Job Corps, because they generally are the first program representatives youths and their families deal with. As part of their outreach activities, OA agencies communicate to potentially eligible youths, as well as to other people and organizations who can identify and refer eligible youths, about the availability of the Job Corps and its opportunities. OA agencies must conduct outreach by using activities that are appropriate for their needs (for example, flyers, billboards, center tours, off-center presentations, and broadcast outlets) and by developing liaisons and working relationships with community organizations (for example, schools, court officers, employment services, and welfare agencies).

OA contractors are responsible for determining whether a youth who has applied to Job Corps is eligible for the program. The information used to determine eligibility is collected directly from the applicant (over the telephone or face to face) by an OA counselor, who fills out an agency-developed preapplication form or the Job Corps ETA-652 application form.[1] The screener must also obtain from appropriate authorities any additional information needed to determine an applicant's eligibility. If a candidate has a serious health condition or evidence of a behavioral problem, the regional office provides for a review of the case to ensure that eligibility rules are applied fairly and consistently and that persons who could benefit are not denied admission.

The OA contractor is also responsible for notifying eligible applicants of their assignment to a center and for arranging for their departure. To determine that a youth is still interested in Job Corps, an OA counselor will often contact him or her periodically between the time eligibility is determined and a center assignment is made. A youth assigned to a center is contacted by the OA counselor to determine whether he or she will accept the assignment and to arrange travel and departure dates. At the beginning of this assignment interview, the OA counselor also checks for changes in the youth's health and emotional or behavioral condition, including recent arrests. The counselor then briefs the youth about the center, describes the program's requirements and expectations, and makes a final check on eligibility.

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[1] Currently, application processing is automated, with information entered into a computer and transferred to Student Pay, Allotment, and Management Information System (SPAMIS) if the student enrolls. At the time of the study, a paper-based system was used.

The OA counselor will brief youths who decide to participate on travel arrangements; advise about baggage, clothing, and documentation; and warn about the consequences of bringing drugs, alcohol, or weapons to the center. The OA counselor will also inform youths that a physical examination, which will include an HIV test, will be required after arrival. If a youth is on probation or parole, the OA counselor must notify the probation or parole officer. Finally, the OA counselor makes all departure arrangements, including escorting or providing an escort for youths to the initial transportation site and providing all travel and meal tickets required for the trip to the center. In addition, some OA counselors maintain contact with youths after they have arrived on center and throughout their Job Corps experience. Center staff are also often involved in the center assignment decision, and staff at most centers make prearrival calls to students.

B. OA COUNSELORS AND THEIR WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

OA counselors bear the primary responsibility for making their communities aware of Job Corps, for providing information about the program to interested youths and their families, for determining the eligibility of applicants, and for counseling those eligible applicants who decide to enroll. This section describes the characteristics and experiences these key staff have had with Job Corps. It also presents data on selected aspects of their working arrangements and sources of information about Job Corps that may shape their ability to recruit, screen, and counsel applicants effectively.

1. Characteristics and Experience of OA Counselors

Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, OA agencies employ as counselors a disproportionate share of the gender group that is the most difficult to recruit to Job Corps, namely females. Female admissions counselors recruit two-thirds of eligible applicants overall, with noteworthy differences by contractor type (Table III.1). Of applicants recruited by State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) or other state agency contractors, just over half are recruited by female counselors. Of those recruited by a center holding an OA contract, over three-fourths (79 percent) are recruited by female counselors. However, while females recruit two-thirds of all applicants, females make up just over 40 percent of all students. Job Corps' goal has long been that half its students be female, but despite progress in recent years and concerted efforts to attract young women, the goal has not been fully realized. Young women are considerably more reluctant to live away from home, and their families less inclined to allow them to, than is the case with young men. Furthermore, a higher proportion of young women have child care responsibilities. The fact that a disproportionate share of OA counselors are female may reflect a belief that, in general, women can communicate more effectively to female applicants than male counselors can.

The ethnic composition of admissions counselors reflects the diversity of the students attracted to Job Corps. Black counselors recruit about one-half (47 percent) of all applicants nationwide, white counselors recruit 36 percent, and Hispanic counselors recruit 14 percent. This mirrors the ethnic composition of students, of whom 50 percent are black, 28 percent are white, and 15 percent are Hispanic. The different types of contracts have broadly similar ethnic diversity among

TABLE III.1

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND JOB EXPERIENCE OF OA COUNSELORS
(Percentage of Students Recruited by Each Agency Type by a Counselor with the Indicated Attribute)

		Contractor Type		
	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Female	66	52	79	68
White	36	36	29	40
Black	47	47	54	41
Hispanic	14	14	16	12
Employed in Current Position as OA Counselor for (in Years)				
Less than 1	36	17	38	48
1 to 2	24	14	35	24
3 to 5	17	20	21	12
More than 5	23	49	7	16
Worked for Job Corps in Other Capacity	27	11	45	26

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

counselors. However, students recruited by Job Corps centers are slightly more likely than students recruited by a SESA or private agency to be recruited by a black or Hispanic counselor.

The ability of an OA counselor to describe the Job Corps program and what life is like on centers and to make good decisions on eligibility may depend on tenure in the job and experience in Job Corps, among other things. The bottom part of Table III.1 shows the percentage of applicants recruited by OA counselors with differing job tenures and the percentage recruited by counselors who had held other jobs with the program.

Overall, most OA counselors had limited experience in their position at the time of our survey, and few had held another position in Job Corps before becoming an OA counselor. About 60 percent of applicants are recruited by someone with two or fewer years of experience as an OA counselor for Job Corps. Less than one-fourth are recruited by an OA counselor with five or more years of experience. Just over one-fourth of OA counselors had held a prior position with Job Corps.

Differences across types of contractors in the job tenure of OA counselors they employ reflect the nature of the agencies and the recent turnover in OA contracts. Counselors employed by SESAs or other state agencies have much longer job tenures, with almost one-half of applicants recruited by a counselor who has worked for the state agency for more than five years. In contrast, over 70 percent of applicants recruited by counselors employed by Job Corps centers or other private contractors are counseled by someone who has worked as an OA counselor for two years or less. In part, this reflects a recent shift from using SESAs to engaging in a competitive procurement process. As OA contracts have passed from SESAs or other state agencies to private entities, such as Job Corps centers and other private contractors, new counselors were hired.[2]

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[2] Nearly all the OA contracts in Regions 1 and 10 have been awarded to new contractors in the past several years. Consequently few OA counselors in these two regions have worked as OA (continued...)

While overall about one-fourth of applicants are recruited by a counselor with Job Corps experience, the proportion is much higher among centers holding an OA contract (45 percent). Among counselors with Job Corps experience, most had worked at a center in some capacity, with "residential adviser" being their most common job (data not shown). In contrast, the counselors who were employed by other private contractors and who had previously worked elsewhere in the Job Corps system had been employed mostly as placement specialists, which reflects the common linkage of OA and placement functions in Job Corps.

The limited experience revealed by these data underscore the importance of ensuring that OA counselors are well informed both about the overall Job Corps program and about specific centers. The OA system cannot rely on the information accumulated through OA counselors' experiences with the program to convey accurate information about center life. Counselors' collective experience appears to be too limited to allow them to describe the program well without extensive support. Next, after describing selected characteristics of OA counselors' working arrangements, we present data on OA counselors' sources of information about specific centers.

2. Attributes of OA Counselors' Jobs

Several attributes of an OA counselor's job may affect the services counselors provide to potential recruits. This section presents information on several of these attributes: whether the counselor works full- or part-time, the method of compensation, the categories of students the counselor recruits, and the allocation of work time to outreach, admissions-related, and other activities.

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[3](...continued)
counselors for more than three years. See Appendix Table B.4.

Full-time OA counselors recruit nearly all Job Corps students (96 percent). Students recruited by SESAs are somewhat more likely to be recruited by a counselor who works part-time (about 10 percent). This pattern probably reflects the fact that SESAs recruit proportionately more students than other OA agencies in sparsely populated rural areas, where the OA counselor sees few students per year and performs other duties unrelated to Job Corps.

Nearly all OA counselors (85 percent) receive a salary; most of the rest (14 percent) are paid on an hourly basis (Table III.2). Hourly wages are more prevalent among OA counselors working for private agencies (about 20 percent) than among counselors at SESAs or Job Corps centers.

Each OA agency's contract specifies the number of male and female students it is to recruit and, within each gender group, the number of residential and nonresidential students. Individual counselors were asked about which groups they were responsible for recruiting. Just less than half (46 percent) of students are recruited by a counselor who recruits both male and female residential students (but not nonresidential students). A similar percentage (42 percent) is recruited by someone who recruits all gender and residential groups. It is interesting that such a high percentage of students is recruited by a counselor who recruits all types of students (including nonresidential students), because it implies that a large percentage of students is recruited from areas near centers with a nonresidential option. A relatively small percentage is recruited by a counselor who recruits only special groups of students (usually females or nonresidential students).

Finally, we present data on how OA counselors reported allocating their time among outreach activities, admissions-related activities, and other duties. These data show that just less than two-thirds of counselors' work time is spent on admissions-related activities, just over one-fourth is spent on outreach, and 10 percent is spent on other activities. The allocation of time to these various aspects of the job is similar across the different types of OA agencies.

TABLE III.2

ATTRIBUTES OF OA COUNSELORS' JOBS

(Percentage of Students Recruited by Each Agency Type by a Counselor with the Indicated Job Attribute)

	Contractor Type			
	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Method of Basic Compensation				
Salary	85[a]	85	94	77[a]
Hourly wage	14	15	6	20
Categories of Students Recruited				
All categories	42	32	57	39
Male and female residential students only	46	63	25	50
Special groups only (only females, only nonresidential students)	11	5	19	11
Allocation of Time				
Percentage of time on				
Outreach	28	27	28	28
Admissions activities	62	63	63	61
Other activities	10	10	10	10

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

[a] One percent overall and 2 percent of private counselors reported being compensated by some other method.

on outreach, and 10 percent is spent on other activities. The allocation of time to these various aspects of the job is similar across the different types of OA agencies.

C. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES OF OA COUNSELORS

Counselors spend just over one-fourth of their time doing outreach through direct contacts with prospective students and through contacts with agencies that might refer students. As shown in Table III.3, just over 60 percent of students were recruited by someone who made a home visit. Of those counselors who visit, each made an average of 72 visits in the past 12 months. SESA counselors were more likely to make visits, but Job Corps center screeners who make visits make more per counselor. Center tours are a common, but by no means universal, method of making interested persons aware of what Job Corps has to offer. Contacts with potential sources of referrals are reported in the bottom section of Table III.3. Schools are a nearly universal referral source. Most counselors also contact courts and law enforcement agencies. Nearly all who have any contact said they had phone contact or sent materials. Not everyone with a contact, however, made in-person presentations.

To get an idea of how effective OA counselors believe the various types of outreach activities to be, we asked for estimates of the proportion of their applicants who heard about Job Corps from various sources. OA counselors estimated that "walk-ins" (persons who heard about the program from someone they know or through the media) are the most important source of recruits, accounting for just less than half of all applicants (45 percent) (Table III.4). The counselors estimated that referrals from agencies such as schools, the legal system, and the welfare office accounted for just over one-third of applicants. Finally, they thought that direct contacts with individual youths at outreach events such as job fairs accounted for just under one-fifth of applicants.

TABLE III.3

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES OF OA COUNSELORS

(Percentage of Students Recruited by Each Agency Type by a Counselor with the Indicated Goal or Incentive)

	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Direct Contacts				
Home Visits for Outreach Purposes				
Percentage conducting visits	62	68	63	56
Average number conducted in the past 12 months	72	67	111	45
Arranging or Conducting Center Tours				
Percentage who arrange or conduct center tours	72	59	87	72
Average number of center tours in the past 12 months	41	15	50	48
Contacts with Groups That Might Refer Students				
Schools				
Any contact in past 12 months	97	99	93	98
In-person presentation	92	91	91	93
Community-Based Organizations				
Any contact in past 12 months	93	90	94	95
In-person presentation	88	84	90	89
Courts or Law Enforcement Agencies				
Any contact in past 12 months	93	95	88	94
In-person presentation	65	59	69	67
Welfare Agencies				
Any contact in past 12 months	92	94	91	91
In-person presentation	67	67	78	60
Other Social Service Agencies				
Any contact in past 12 months	89	82	87	95
In-person presentation	78	71	79	83

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

TABLE III.4

OA COUNSELORS' PERCEPTIONS AND STUDENTS' REPORTS ABOUT HOW APPLICANTS HEAR ABOUT JOB CORPS

(Percentage of Applicants Recruited by OA Counselor with the Indicated Attribute)

	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
OA Counselors' Estimates of How Applicants Heard About Job Corps				
Through one of the referral sources	36	35	32	39
From family or friends or through an advertisement (walk-in)	45	49	49	39
Through an outreach function like a job fair workshop or school	19	17	19	22

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA counselor survey.

	Percentage of Students
How Students Reported First Hearing About Job Corps	
Parents, relative, or friends	68
Media or mail	18
School or school counselor	5
Welfare office	3
Employment service	2
Other	4
OA counselor	3

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Baseline Interview.

NOTE: Figures sum to more than 100 because some respondents reporting "OA counselor" also reported school, welfare office, employment service, or other.

Sample members' reports about how they first heard about Job Corps generally confirm the OA counselors' relative rankings. Word of mouth accounts for over two-thirds, and media accounts for nearly 20 percent. Only 14 percent of the study sample said they first heard about Job Corps at school, the welfare office, an employment service, or some other place. Of this 14 percent, just 3 percent said they first heard about the program from an OA counselor. Of course, inconsistencies between the OA data and the student data are to be expected; for example, an OA counselor might first meet someone at a school event who first heard about Job Corps from a friend.

The student data in particular underscore the importance of word of mouth as a source of interest in the program. Also noteworthy, however, is the very large number of students who said they first heard of Job Corps through the media. During the period of the baseline survey and recruitment of the study sample, Job Corps made a concerted effort to build up on-board strength, and the National Office invested substantial funds in media advertising, which our data suggest had an effect.

Do the outreach efforts of OA counselors, who spend over one-fourth of their time doing outreach, represent a good investment of their time and other resources, in terms of generating new students? By OA counselors' estimates, these outreach efforts directly or indirectly generate slightly more than half of all applicants. On the other hand, students' reports suggest that such outreach efforts might generate as few as 14 percent of applicants, though the actual figure is very likely higher. Our data will not support a more refined estimate of the yield of outreach efforts. Yet it is important to keep in mind that, given the incentives in the system to meet arrival goals, outreach is most likely a residual activity. OA counselors are unlikely to sacrifice the opportunity to enroll a qualified candidate in favor of conducting outreach activities. Rather, they conduct outreach activities as they have time, and as they need to in order to generate an adequate flow of qualified applicants.

Some evidence for this view of how the process operates is found in the patterns of outreach activity by region reported in Appendix Tables B.5 and B.6. OA counselors in Region 9 (California and Arizona) reported spending less time on outreach and doing outreach activities to fewer referral sources than counselors in other regions. Yet center capacity utilization and waiting times for enrollment were higher in Region 9 than in other regions. Thus, OA counselors there did less outreach, most likely because they needed to do less to keep the region's centers at full capacity.

D. ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Taking applications and determining the eligibility of youth who apply for Job Corps are key OA functions. Counselors assess the eligibility of each applicant, making sure that 11 criteria established in law and outlined in the Job Corps Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) are met (see Table III.5). However, they must provide full verification and documentation only for a 5 percent sample (based on the last two digits of the youth's social security number). For these sample cases, full verification is to be provided for criteria 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11; applicants can self-certify for the others.

Most eligibility criteria are straightforward to interpret. The decision on whether or not they are satisfied is based on objective evidence that can easily be verified. The criteria pertaining to age, selective service registration, residency, economic disadvantage, need for additional education/training, child care, and parental consent are in this category. If health problems are noted, assessment of health history requires review by a medical consultant that each regional office retains. The remaining criteria--environment, capabilities and aspirations, and behavioral adjustment--require that OA counselors exercise considerable judgment.

Discussions with OA managers indicate that OA counselors rely heavily on the criteria specified in the PRH for assessing whether the characteristics of an applicant's environment impair his or her

TABLE III.5

JOB CORPS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. **Age.** Applicants must be at least 16 years of age and not more than 24 years of age at the time they enroll in Job Corps.

2. **Selective Service Registration.** Male applicants 18 years of age or older must register with the Selective Service Board.

3. **Residency.** Applicants must be legal U.S. residents and permitted to accept permanent employment in the United States.

4. **Economically Disadvantaged.** Applicants, either as an individual or as a member of a family, must receive welfare payments or food stamps, or have income in relation to family size that does not exceed either OMB poverty guidelines or 70 percent of the lower living standards income level.

5. **Need for Additional Education/Training.** Applicants must either have left high school without a diploma or require additional education, vocational training, or related support services in order to hold meaningful employment, participate successfully in regular school, qualify for other suitable training programs, or satisfy Armed Forces enlistment requirements.

6. **Environment.** Applicants must be currently living in an environment characterized by

   - Disruptive home life, unsafe or overcrowded dwelling
   - Limited job opportunities
   - Disruptive communities with high crime rates

   These are disorienting factors that impair the applicant's prospects for successful participation in other training, education, or other assistance programs.

7. **Health History.** Applicants must be free of any health condition (medical, dental, or mental/emotional) that represents a hazard to themselves or others at a center, precludes participation in Job Corps with an expectation of successful completion, or requires intensive and costly treatment.

8. **Behavioral Adjustment History.** Applicants must be free of behavioral problems that would prevent them from adjusting to the Job Corps standards of conduct, or would prevent others from benefiting from the program, or requires periodic face-to-face supervision from the court system or court-imposed financial obligations.

9. **Child Care.** Applicants with dependent children must have established suitable arrangements for the care of these children for the proposed period of enrollment.

10. **Parental Consent.** Applicants under the age of majority must obtain consent of a parent or guardian to enroll.

11. **Capability and Aspirations to Participate.** Applicants must have the capabilities and aspirations needed to complete the program successfully and secure the maximum benefits of Job Corps.

ability to participate successfully in education or training. The PRH directs OA counselors to rely on their knowledge of the applicant's home situation and community to form a judgment as to whether one of the disorienting conditions--disruptive home life, limited job opportunities, or disruptive community factors--is present. Accordingly, OA counselors exercise a great deal of discretion in determining whether an applicant meets the environment criterion. OA managers indicated that counselors seldom find an applicant ineligible on the environment criterion, if she or he is otherwise eligible according to all other criteria and can benefit from Job Corps.

Under the capabilities and aspirations criterion, OA counselors must make a judgment based on information gathered and observations made during the application process as to whether applicants have the personal commitment and ability to take advantage of Job Corps. Our interviews with OA counselors inquired about how they use several different factors in assessing whether a candidate is suitable for Job Corps (Table III.6). Nearly all OA counselors (95 percent) use the youth's educational objectives, and most of these (88 percent) view having attainment of a GED as a goal as evidence the youth is suitable for Job Corps. Most (86 percent) use vocational goals in this assessment also. In terms of specific uses, just over two-thirds said vocational objectives consistent with Job Corps trade offerings were evidence that a candidate was suitable for Job Corps. Just over one-fourth said unrealistic vocational goals--those requiring high levels of advanced training or paying very high wages--caused them to question whether the candidate was suitable for Job Corps. Finally, most OA counselors use observations of behavior (91 percent) and attitudes (77 percent) during the application process. Interestingly, one-fourth said they used school or work experience in assessing a candidate's suitability for Job Corps. These data strongly suggest that OA counselors consider several factors in forming a judgment about whether an applicant has the capability and aspirations to benefit from Job Corps.

TABLE III.6

FACTORS USED IN ASSESSING APPLICANTS' SUITABILITY FOR JOB CORPS
(Percentage of Job Corps Students Recruited by an OA Counselor
Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

		Contractor Type		
	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Uses Educational Objectives to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	95	93	95	96
Views Having GED Attainment as Goal as Evidence of Suitability for Job Corps	88	86	90	88
Uses Vocational Objectives to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	86	89	90	82
Views Vocational Objectives Matched with Job Corps Offerings as Evidence of Suitability for Job Corps	68	75	73	59
Views Unrealistic Vocational Goals as Evidence of Unsuitability for Job Corps	28	28	27	28
Uses Observations of Behavior During Application to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	91	92	87	93
Uses Observations of Attitudes to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	77	82	83	70
Uses Prior School or Work Experiences to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	28	37	18	30

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

For the most part, as with the environment criterion, OA counselors form their assessment of the youth's suitability for Job Corps, but OA managers said they rarely determine someone to be ineligible for Job Corps solely on the grounds that the person lacks the capability and aspirations to succeed. Rather, an OA counselor who has reason to question an applicant's commitment is more likely to counsel the youth to think carefully about entering Job Corps. Some OA counselors reported that it is very difficult to predict which students will follow through and succeed in Job Corps and which students either will not enroll or will leave early. Many spoke about being surprised by students' outcomes: some who looked sure to succeed did not make it; others who looked questionable got to Job Corps and did well.

Shortly after our OA counselor survey was completed, Job Corps introduced a Capability and Aspirations Assessment Tool (CAAT) that counselors are now required to complete for every applicant to assist in their determination of suitability for the program. Because CAAT was developed by Job Corps after extensive consultation with OA managers and counselors, the form essentially formalizes the practices that counselors were following with applicants.

The behavioral adjustment criterion is a final area in which OA counselors and program staff often must negotiate a fine line. On the one hand, Job Corps seeks to offer youths who may have been in trouble with the law the opportunity to turn their lives around by getting a GED and learning a trade. Thus, the program does not want to exclude youths who have records of involvement with the law. On the other hand, a youth enrolling in Job Corps must not be currently under the control of the criminal justice system or juvenile justice system. Furthermore, the program is not equipped to handle youths who pose a threat of violence to themselves or others. Thus, youths with prior involvement with the criminal justice system are carefully screened first by the OA agency and then, if the OA agency uncovers a behavior problem, by the regional office or its designee. This process is intended to ensure that care and fairness are exercised in determining youths to be eligible or ineligible for Job Corps on the basis of the behavior adjustment criterion. The process aims to take calculated risks by offering youths with troubled histories the opportunity to get the training and education they need to become productive adults.

The behavioral adjustment eligibility criteria have recently taken on increased importance because of the policy changes introduced by Job Corps in the first part of 1995. The introduction of the expanded zero tolerance policy for violence and for drug and alcohol use, as well as the 30-day probationary period, emphasized the importance of screening applicants for a history of behavioral problems that include drug use and criminal behavior.

We asked OA counselors about how they assess an applicant's history of drug use and involvement with the criminal justice system (Table III.7). Nearly all counselors (accounting for 93 percent of applicants) are attempting to make an independent determination about whether each applicant is drug free regardless of what the applicant reports on the application form. Counselors are relying upon an applicant's self-report of drug use and their own observations of his or her behaviors and responses to questions during the admissions process to make this determination. Sixty-four percent of applicants are recruited by counselors who use applicant self-reported information, and 60 percent are recruited by counselors who use their own observations during the application process. A very small minority of counselors (just three percent) said they are requiring applicants to take a drug test. Practices are similar across contractor types.

While policy requires that counselors obtain records for applicants who report involvement with the criminal justice system, OA agencies have placed a heightened emphasis on determining the extent to which applicants who do not self-report criminal histories are, or have been, involved. Generally, applicants' records are obtained from any jurisdiction the applicant either resides in

TABLE III.7

OA COUNSELORS' APPROACHES TO ASSESSING DRUG USE AND DETERMINING PRIOR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

(Percentage of Applicants Screened by an OA Counselor Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
		Assessing Drug Use		
Determining for All Applicants Whether Drug Free	93	93	90	96
Using Applicant Self-Report	64	66	57	68
Using Own Observations of the Applicant During the Application Process	60	57	62	61
Requiring a Drug Test	3	5	2	3
		Determining Involvement with the Criminal Justice System		
Criminal Justice Records Required for All Applicants	96	98	91	97
Counselor Requests Records	55	60	53	54
Counselor Requires Applicant to Obtain Records	10	9	14	7
Counselor Both Requests Records and Requires Applicant to Obtain Records	35	31	33	39

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

currently or resided in within the previous two years. Our data indicate that nearly all counselors (accounting for 96 percent of applicants) require the criminal justice records of all applicants (bottom part of Table III.7). Usually, the counselor personally requests the records from the relevant criminal justice agencies, and 55 percent of all eligible applicants are recruited by counselors who do so. In addition, a substantial minority both request the records themselves and ask the applicant to obtain any criminal records (35 percent of all eligible applicants are recruited by counselors who use this practice). Finally, a small minority of counselors (who recruit only 10 percent of eligible applicants) rely solely on the applicant for any necessary criminal records. Again, different types of contractors follow similar practices.

E. CENTER ASSIGNMENT

A youth who has been determined to be eligible for Job Corps is assigned to a center and given a date to travel there. Next, we describe the various factors that are considered and the processes followed in making the center assignment.

1. Factors Considered in Making Center Assignments

OA agencies recruit youths primarily for Job Corps centers located within a region. Overall, approximately 98 percent of all eligible applicants during the period of sample intake for the study attended a center within the region in which they resided at application. Exceptions are allowed when centers in an applicant's home region have long waiting periods but those in a nearby region are operating below capacity.[3] In assignment of youths to centers within a region, distance is a major factor. Over half of sample members in the National Job Corps Study program group who enrolled at a center in their region enrolled in the center that was closest or second closest to their home (Appendix Table B.10). We infer that keeping transportation costs low and ensuring that youths can return home easily from their assigned center at holidays and other leave times are important objectives in making center assignments.

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[3] During the study intake period, the main sending regions were 2, 5, and 9 (accounting for 70 percent of students sent to other regions), and the main receiving regions were 4 and 7 (accounting for about 70 percent of students received from other regions). The largest bilateral flows were from Region 2 to 4 (20 percent of all exports), from Region 5 to 4 (15 percent), and from Region 9 to7 (21 percent).

The interests and desires of students also weigh in the process. Many students want to attend a specific center. The baseline interviews revealed that about half of eligible applicants said they knew when they applied which center they wanted to attend. The reasons given for preferring a specific center offer insights into the factors that influence students' views about their upcoming Job Corps experience and the constraints the assignment process must deal with. Of the half who had a preference, 30 percent gave location or physical setting of the center as the reason for wanting to attend--23 percent wanted to attend a specific center because it was close to home, 4 percent because it was far from home, and 3 percent because its setting was attractive. Approximately 10 percent noted as their reason for selecting a specific center some other attribute--5 percent said it offered the trade they wanted, 3 percent said it had a good reputation, and 2 percent said it was the right size or had the right mix of students. Finally, just under 10 percent either knew someone at the center (7 percent) or were following the screener's advice (2 percent).

Even if applicants have not formed a preference for a specific center, they may have a preference for a specific trade. Since each center offers only a subset of all the trades, a student's expressed vocational preference also can be a factor in the center assignment decision. Approximately 85 percent of eligible applicants reported on the baseline interview that they had a vocational training preference, although just 5 percent said their vocational preference was the reason they preferred a specific center.

Also entering the calculation is the period that a student must wait before enrollment at a Job Corps center. Job Corps has a fixed number of slots, and when centers are operating at full capacity, new enrollees may need to wait for a slot to open up as experienced students complete the program. If a center is operating below its assigned capacity, the waiting period for enrollment will be brief. The waiting period can vary from just a few days in some regions to several months in others; it can also vary at certain times of the year. Waiting times for female residential students are generally much shorter than waiting times for male residential students.

If some centers in the region are operating below capacity, OA counselors are reluctant to have the youths they recruit placed on waiting lists, because they perceive a higher risk that an applicant forced to wait a long time will not enroll. In this circumstance, a good candidate in whom the OA counselor may have invested considerable personal effort may not want to wait and may decide not to enroll. Thus, to a degree that varies greatly from case to case, pressures exist in the system to assign applicants to centers that are underenrolled.

In summary, the process for assigning students to Job Corps centers weighs several, often competing, objectives:

- Keep travel distance and cost to a reasonable level
- Keep the centers in the region operating at full capacity
- Avoid making students wait any longer than necessary for assignment
- Accommodate students' expressed preferences for a specific center
- Accommodate students' preferences for centers with specific attributes (such as trades offered, location, mix of students)

The extent to which these various factors weigh in any specific student's center assignment varies greatly. Our data indicate that the role of location and travel distance is very different from region to region. Much depends on the location of the Job Corps center relative to the areas from which students are drawn. Median distance is shortest in Region 9, where 25 percent of students are nonresidential and centers tend to be located in or near urban areas. Students in Region 9 tend to be assigned to centers close to home; indeed, half are from the same county in which their center is located. At the opposite extreme, the highest median travel distance is in Region 4, which encompasses the area from Kentucky to Florida. Over half of students travel at least 230 miles to attend Job Corps. As in Region 9, the travel distances appear to be due at least in part to the location of centers relative to students' homes. Region 4 students are drawn from the Piedmont and coastal areas of the Southeast, whereas several centers (including a very large one) are located in Kentucky and the Appalachian area of North Carolina. Appendix Table B.10 provides data by region on distances from the home areas of Job Corps students to the Job Corps centers they attend.

2. Processes for Assigning Students to Job Corps Centers

The center assignment process varied across regions at the time of the study. In some regions, the regional office played a clearinghouse role, keeping track of the number of new slots expected to be open in each center and assigning a specific number of center slots to each OA contractor. In other regions, the regional office had delegated this responsibility to the OA contractors, who communicated directly with centers to find out where slots were open and decide how the available new students would be allocated.

OA counselors reported playing a limited role in assigning students to centers. Only 20 percent of all eligible applicants are recruited by an OA counselor who can assign applicants to specific centers. Although most OA counselors do not assign applicants to centers, they appear to have a good understanding of how the various factors are weighed in the center assignment decision.

Indeed, they were able to predict correctly which center a given youth would attend for nearly 90 percent of the program group members who ultimately attended a center.[4]

Given the fluidity and flexibility of the assignment process, an important role of the OA counselor is to manage students' preferences and expectations about center assignment, as described in the next section.

F. ADMISSIONS COUNSELING

1. Candidates Admitted to Job Corps

After an applicant has been found eligible and assigned to a center, the OA counselor helps in several ways to prepare the youth for enrollment at a Job Corps center. First, the counselor provides information about Job Corps in general, and possibly about specific centers, and responds to questions. The counselor may provide detailed information about specific centers at various points in the process from outreach to enrollment, but regardless of when the information is provided, it ultimately helps prepare the youth to enroll by conveying an accurate sense of what Job Corps is like and of what to expect. Since applicants may be assigned to a center other than the one they requested or to one that does not offer a trade in which they have expressed a preference, an element of this information exchange about centers is managing the expectations of applicants so as to avoid disappointing them. Second, when the youth has been assigned to a center, the OA counselor arranges transportation and notifies the youth of the departure date. Third, OA counselors review the applicant's eligibility status at the time of departure to ensure the youth remains eligible at the time of enrollment. Finally, some OA counselors contact youths after they arrive at a center to learn about their initial adjustment to the program and to provide any needed support. This section describes these counselor activities that prepare applicants for enrollment in Job Corps.

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[4] As part of data collection for the study, we asked OA counselors to indicate which center they believed each youth would be assigned to. This information was provided before random assignment so that the information would be available for all sample members, including both control group members and persons who were assigned to the program group but did not enroll.

Most applicants see a visual representation of the center they will attend, and nearly all receive written materials on center policies. Just less than half of eligible applicants (44 percent) are recruited by counselors who usually show applicants videotapes of centers (Table III.8). Similarly, 46 percent are recruited by counselors who usually show them pictures of centers. About one-third of applicants are recruited by a counselor who seldom or never uses videos, and 30 percent are recruited by a counselor who seldom or never uses pictures. Counselors who usually provide written materials about the centers recruit 92 percent of all applicants. Counselors who work for private OA contractors that are not directly affiliated with a Job Corps center are somewhat more likely to use videos and pictures and less likely to use written descriptions of centers during the recruitment process.

The written materials provided to applicants include documents explaining the academic and vocational programs at centers, the residential living program, the pay and bonus system, and statements about the zero tolerance, one-strike-and-you're-out, and 30-day probationary period policies. OA counselors recruiting nearly all applicants (98 percent) said they provided written material explaining Job Corps' policies on zero tolerance for violence and drug use. In addition, an OA counselor provides over 85 percent of applicants with written explanations of the one-strike and 30-day probationary period policies.

Another important aspect of preparing applicants for enrollment is to deal with their preferences for a particular vocational trade or their preferences to attend a particular center. As indicated earlier, counselors have little control over the assignment of applicants to specific centers. Only about 20 percent of applicants are recruited by counselors who can also assign them to specific

TABLE III.8

MATERIALS USED TO INFORM APPLICANTS ABOUT CENTERS AND APPROACHES TO MANAGING EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO CENTER ASSIGNMENT

(Percentage of Applicants Screened by an OA Counselor Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Show Videotapes of Centers				
Usually	44	37	40	51
Sometimes	23	34	14	21
Show Pictures of Centers				
Usually	46	47	36	51
Sometimes	25	21	28	26
Provide Written Material About Centers				
Usually	92	95	92	89
Sometimes	5	4	3	8
Counselor Response to Center Preference				
Tell applicant to be open-minded	57	61	48	60
Attempt to satisfy preference	39	38	41	39
Counselor Response to Vocational Preference				
Tell applicant to be open-minded	58	60	57	58
Attempt to satisfy preference	40	40	37	41

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

centers. Because assignment to particular centers affects applicants' vocational training options and their distance from home, counselors must prepare them for the possibility of assignment to any number of centers and must manage their expectations regarding the vocational offerings available.

Most applicants (nearly 60 percent) are recruited by OA counselors who tell them to be "open-minded" when they express a preference for a specific center or a specific trade. The rest are recruited by a counselor who attempts to satisfy both the vocational preference and the center preference.

While most counselors follow these patterns, we noted some interesting regional variations. OA counselors in Region 1 are very likely to tell applicants to be open-minded about their vocation (100 percent) and about their center (67 percent). Those in Region 9 tend to tell applicants to be open-minded about their vocation (72 percent), but most also attempt to satisfy center preference (67 percent). Finally, Region 10 counselors attempt to satisfy preferences on vocation (66 percent), while telling applicants to be open-minded about their center (58 percent) (Appendix Table B.11).

The final steps in the assignment process involve activities that OA counselors conduct with applicants before, at the time of, and after center assignment. The extent to which OA counselors maintain a strong connection to the youth during this period may directly affect the likelihood that the youth decides to enroll in Job Corps. Over three-fourths (78 percent) of all eligible applicants are recruited by an OA counselor who initiates contact with eligible applicants between eligibility determination and center assignment (Table III.9). Eligible applicants who are recruited by counselors employed by private agencies not affiliated with a center are somewhat less likely than counselors at other types of agencies to initiate contact with a youth awaiting center assignment (73 percent compared to 81 or 82 percent).

TABLE III.9

OA COUNSELORS' CONTACTS WITH APPLICANTS BETWEEN CENTER ASSIGNMENT AND ARRIVAL AT CENTER

(Percentage of Applicants Screened by OA Counselors Who Perform the Indicated Activity)

	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Initiate Contact with Eligible Applicants Awaiting Center Assignment	78	82	81	73
Conduct Interview at Time of Center Assignment	93	96	87	94
Review Eligibility at Time of Center Assignment	61	68	58	57
Review Involvement with Criminal Justice System at Time of Center Assignment	57	65	56	51
Review Health History/Drug Use at Time of Center Assignment	57	64	53	54
Review Capability and Aspirations at Time of Center Assignment	55	62	50	55
Contact Prior to Departure	96	95	95	98
Escort Applicant to Point of Departure	72	77	69	70
Contact after Arrival at Center	57	39	68	61
Try to Contact No-Shows	97	98	94	98

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

At the point when an OA counselor informs the youth of the center assignment, the counselor has the opportunity to collect additional information regarding eligibility, formally inspect the eligibility criteria to ensure the youth is not a fraudulent enrollment, review the youth's health history or drug use, examine any involvement with the criminal justice system, or gauge the youth's ability to benefit from the Job Corps program by assessing capabilities and aspirations. The relative emphasis the OA counselor places on these activities reflects the counselor's philosophy and goals, in particular whether the object is to assess each youth's match with the program or to ensure that enrollment targets are met. Nearly all eligible applicants (93 percent) are recruited by a counselor who conducts a formal center assignment interview. Most also are recruited by a counselor who reviews eligibility (61 percent), involvement with the criminal justice system (57 percent), health history (57 percent), and capability and aspiration (55 percent) as part of the interview.

OA counselors have responsibilities after applicants have been assigned to a Job Corps center, including maintaining contact with the applicant prior to departure, escorting the applicant to the point of departure, continuing contact after the applicant arrives on center, and following up with students who do not enter Job Corps (no-shows). The extent to which an OA counselor maintains contact with the youth immediately before and after center arrival to answer questions or alleviate concerns is likely to affect directly the likelihood that the youth enters Job Corps, as well as the likelihood of early termination.

Ninety-six percent of all applicants are recruited by a counselor who usually maintains contact with them between center assignment and departure. This practice is widespread across contractor types and region. Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of all eligible applicants are recruited by an OA counselor who usually escorts applicants to their point of departure.

Fifty-seven percent of all eligible applicants are recruited by an OA counselor who usually contacts applicants after they arrive on center. SESAs and other state agencies are least likely to maintain such contact. Nearly all eligible applicants (97 percent) are recruited by an OA counselor who usually attempts to contact no-shows.

2. Candidates Not Admitted to Job Corps

Some applicants for Job Corps do not meet the program's eligibility criteria. Sometimes the education and training needs of an applicant can best be met through an alternative program in the youth's community, so the OA counselor refers the applicant to other service providers. Nearly all OA counselors (those serving 98 percent of applicants) said they usually refer ineligible applicants to other service providers for assistance (Table III.10). Looking at the approaches used by OA counselors who said they refer ineligible applicants to other service providers, relatively few (accounting for 18 percent of applicants) said they give ineligible applicants only a listing of referrals and expect them to make their own contact. Most OA counselors (those accounting for 79 percent of applicants) said they try to match ineligible applicants with the most appropriate referral source. OA counselors from SESAs were less likely to say they refer most applicants to another program, less likely to say they tried to match the person with an appropriate agency, and more likely to say they provided only a list of training agencies than were OA counselors working for Job Corps centers or other private agencies. OA counselors reported that they routinely refer applicants to a broad range of agencies. Nearly all (accounting for over 90 percent of applicants) routinely refer to JTPA agencies or other training programs and schools. Also used by many OA counselors are community-based organizations (78 percent), SESAs (65 percent of those who were not employed by such organizations), and welfare agencies (58 percent). Approximately half said they referred

TABLE III.10

PRACTICES IN REFERRING INELIGIBLE JOB CORPS APPLICANTS AND AGENCIES TO WHICH THEY ARE REFERRED

(Percentage of Applicants Screened by a Counselor Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Usually Refer Applicants Who Are Not Able to Enter Job Corps to Other Service Provider	98	95	100	98
Usually Refer Only by Providing a List of Service Providers	18	25	15	16
Usually Refer by Matching to a Specific Service Provider	79	69	85	82
Types of Agencies to Which Applicants Are Referred:				
JTPA agencies/other training programs	93			
Schools	91			
Community-based organizations	78			
SESAs	65			
Welfare agencies	58			
Churches or other religious organizations	54			
Private employment agencies	50			
Armed services recruiting agencies	38			

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

people to religious organizations and private employment agencies, and just over one-third said they referred people to armed forces recruiters.

G. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

This section presents data on two factors that may affect OA counselors' ability to perform their key counseling functions well: (1) OA agencies' use of goals and incentives for monitoring counselors' performance, and (2) sources of counselors' information about specific Job Corps centers.

1. Use of Goals

Establishing clear, attainable goals is an important way to hold both individual OA counselors and OA agencies accountable for the work they do. Indeed, DOL's Office of Inspector General (OIG) identified the requirement that counselors fulfill goals as a hallmark of effective recruitment operations. In recognition of the importance of setting goals, Job Corps has instituted a performance system that holds OA agencies accountable for two key outcomes: (1) the number of students who arrive on center, and (2) the percentage of students who stay at least 30 days. The first goal is geared to ensuring that centers have the constant flow of new students necessary to operate at full or nearly full capacity. Operating at less than full capacity wastes program resources, because much per-student cost is fixed. The second goal, retention, seeks to ensure that OA agencies send to the program only students who are well suited for center life, have a clear understanding of what is expected, and have an accurate picture of what center life will be like. Students arriving on center with unrealistic expectations are far more likely to terminate early.

Data from the OA counselor interview indicate the extent to which OA agencies were implementing the practices that Job Corps was trying to promote in establishing its performance measurement system for contractors. Job Corps formally instituted its OA performance measurement system in program year 1996 (latter half of calendar year 1995). Thus, our survey of OA counselors conducted in early 1996 captures program practices at an early stage of implementation of the new standards.

Table III.11 shows the extent to which goals and financial incentives were used in early 1996. At that point, 82 percent of students were recruited by an OA counselor who had a specific goal for the number of students to be sent to Job Corps. Just over one-fourth also had a goal for the number of students staying at least 30 days. Thus, it appears that most OA agencies were focusing on meeting quotas of students to keep centers full. Fewer, however, were tracking whether OA counselors recruited students that stayed for at least 30 days.

The use of financial incentives for individual counselors indicates that managers take the goals seriously. As shown in the bottom part of the table, roughly half the counselors (43 percent) who have goals reported that they were offered some kind of financial incentive, compared to 82 percent who said they had a goal.

Differences in the practices of the different types of OA agencies are noteworthy. All types of OA agencies were about equally likely to have goals--about 80 percent. Furthermore, the percentage of private contractors who provide financial incentives is also nearly 80 percent. In contrast, few SESAs provided financial incentives (6 percent). Interestingly, the centers that conduct OA activities fall between the two. The percentage reporting financial incentives is just less than half the percentage that have goals (79 percent). These data suggest that managers of private OA agencies focus the energies of their staffs on achieving measurable goals to a far greater extent than SESAs do. Of course it is likely that SESA agency managers are working within civil service systems that make it difficult to offer incentive payments.

TABLE III.11

USE OF GOALS AND INCENTIVES IN OA

(Percentage of Students Recruited by Each Agency Type by a Counselor with the Indicated Goal or Incentive)

	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Goals				
Goals for Number of Arrivals	82	81	79	84
Goals for Number Staying at Least 30 Days	27	27	19	33
Incentives				
Offer Some Incentives	43	6	31	78
Offer Incentive for[a]				
Each arrival on center	19	<1	7	40
Each arrival on center over a target number	22	2	17	39
Each student staying at least 30 days	16	2	4	36
Each student over a target number who stays at least 30 days	9	2	4	17

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

[a] OA counselors who reported being eligible for any incentive generally reported being eligible for two or more different types.

2. Sources of Information About Specific Job Corps Centers

One of the key functions of an OA counselor is to provide applicants with a realistic picture both of the Job Corps program and of what life at a center is like. A knowledge of vocational offerings and the setting and facilities is especially important. Clearly, to provide a realistic picture of Job Corps to applicants, counselors must be well informed about the way the program operates at the centers they recruit potential students for and what life is like there. A counselor's knowledge of specific centers will depend on the number of centers to which he or she sends students, length of time on the job, and access to sources of information about specific centers, either from personal visits or from videotapes, descriptive brochures, or newsletters. We begin by presenting data on the number of centers for which OA counselors typically recruit.

Most students are assigned to centers within their home region. Furthermore, distance from the home plays a role in the center assignment decision. While it is not a rule that a student must attend the center closest to home, students are assigned as close to their home as is practical in order to keep transportation costs reasonable and to facilitate visits. This leads to a situation in which the typical OA counselor recruits for approximately 60 percent of the centers in his or her region, or 6 to 7 centers (Table III.12). OA counselors employed by SESAs and by Job Corps centers tend to recruit for a somewhat smaller percentage of the centers in their region (50 and 52 percent, respectively), while OA counselors working for private agencies send students to a somewhat higher percentage of centers in their regions (70 percent).

Table III.12 also provides data on the sources of information that are available to OA counselors about the Job Corps centers that the students they recruit will attend. The data suggest that OA counselors lack extensive firsthand knowledge of the programs at these centers. Counselors who recruit typical eligible applicants reported having visited in the most recent 12-month period only

TABLE III.12

PERCENTAGE OF CENTERS IN REGION FOR WHICH COUNSELORS RECRUIT AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THEM

(Percentage of Students Recruited by Each Agency Type by a Counselor with the Indicated Information)

	Overall	SESAs and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Average Percentage of Centers Attended by Applicants Recruited by OA Counselor	59	50	52	70
Percentage of Centers in Region That Their Recruits Attend That OA Counselor Has				
Visited in past 12 months	15	8	15	19
Received a videotape from	29	36	19	31
Received a descriptive brochure from	38	39	23	47
Received a newsletter from in the past 12 months	11	11	11	12
Received a trade waiting list from in past 12 months	11	7	10	15
Received other information from in the past 12 months	10	7	8	13

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

15 percent of the centers that their applicants might attend. In most regions, this amounts to one or two centers (three in regions that strongly emphasized to contractors and center operators contacts between OA counselors and centers). In conjunction with the short job tenure of OA counselors noted earlier, these data suggest that many counselors have never visited many of the centers they recruit for.

OA counselors also report having materials about only a relatively small share of the centers they recruit for. For example, they report having videotapes (29 percent) and brochures (38 percent) for only a few more centers than the number they have visited. Yet even here the fraction of centers for which the OA counselor has each resource is well below half. Finally, counselors reported receiving the types of communications that could convey the most up-to-date information about centers, such as newsletters or trade waiting lists, for only a few centers (11 percent for newsletters and 11 percent for trade waiting lists). The patterns are broadly similar for the different types of OA agencies.

H. CENTERS' LINKAGES WITH OA CONTRACTORS

The Job Corps program requires each center to "establish and maintain positive partnerships" with OA contractors and their staffs to ensure that students who would enroll are informed about and committed to participating in the center's training program. Centers can establish and maintain these relationships easily when they hold a contract to conduct OA activities themselves, or when OA counselors from another contractor are located close to the center. However, many centers serve students whose homes are distant, and these centers must work with OA counselors who are also far away.

Perhaps the best way for counselors to get a better understanding of a center's unique features or special program offerings is to visit the center. Nearly all centers reported that most (40 percent) or some (57 percent) of the OA counselors that recruit for the center had visited during the past year (Table III.13). Only 4 percent said that none of their OA counselors had visited in the past year. These reports by centers are very different from the finding in the data provided by OA counselors (Table 12), which indicate that an eligible applicant is recruited by a counselor who has recently visited just 15 percent of the centers that his or her applicants might attend. Not surprisingly, Civilian Conservation Centers (CCCs) located away from population centers are less likely to say that most (20 percent) OA counselors visit, and significantly nonresidential centers are more likely to say that most OA counselors had visited (76 percent).

OA counselors can also be informed about the center through videotapes, brochures, other written material (such as newsletters), as well as information on vocational training programs that have waiting lists. Table III.13 summarizes the types of information that centers indicated they provide to OA contractors to describe such features of their center.

Nearly all centers (95 percent) reported providing brochures about their programs to OA contractors, and over two-thirds (70 percent) report providing videotapes. Again, these figures are in sharp contrast to the results of the OA survey, which indicated that a typical eligible applicant is recruited by an OA counselor who receives a brochure for only 38 percent of the centers for which she or he recruits and a video for only 20 percent.

A significant percentage of centers (41 percent) reported providing information to OA contractors about which vocational training programs have waiting lists. Again, this is in contrast to the information from the OA counselor survey, which indicates that the typical applicant is recruited by a counselor who receives trade waiting lists for only 10 percent of the centers he or she recruits for.

TABLE III.13

CENTER DIRECTORS' REPORTS ON OA COUNSELORS' VISITS TO CENTERS AND TYPES OF INFORMATION PROVIDED TO OA COUNSELOR

(Percentage of Centers)

	Overall	CCC	Centers Serving Primarily Residential Students	Centers Serving Significant Nonresidential Students
OA Counselors' Visits to Centers				
Most have visited	40	20	34	76
Some have visited	57	73	64	20
None have visited	4	7	2	4
Types of Information Provided:				
Video	70	77	67	69
Brochure	95	90	94	100
Vocational trade waiting lists	41	33	39	54
Other material (pictures)	61	27	76	69
No information provided	4	7	4	0

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Job Corps Center Mail Survey

These reports from centers are clearly at odds with those provided by OA counselors, who have very different perceptions concerning the centers' specific information available to them. These differences in perception are even more interesting based on the other information we obtained in the visits to centers. In particular, the need to strengthen linkages between OA contractors and centers was a key theme to emerge from site visits. Students, counselors, orientation staff, and instructors all describe problems with OA counselors being out of touch with center life. Many emphasize the need for OA staff to visit the center more often in order to keep current on center programs, facilities, and services. In particular, both students and staff feel that OA counselors lack up-to-date information on center vocational offerings and sometimes give students inaccurate or incomplete information about training opportunities. This picture is reasonably consistent with data from the OA counselor interview indicating that counselors receive very little information about centers but is inconsistent with center reports that they are providing extensive information to OA counselors. It is unclear what is causing this important discrepancy between the reports of counselors and of centers.

Additional information about center staff's perceptions of the overall level of knowledge that OA counselors have about the Job Corps program and about their specific center is provided in Table III.14. A majority of centers (58 percent) feel that OA counselors are "very well informed about Job Corps," but a minority (40 percent) feel that counselors are "very well informed about their specific center." About 39 percent of centers reported that OA counselors were "somewhat informed about Job Corps" and just over half said OA counselors were "somewhat informed about their center." Centers serving a significant nonresidential student population were substantially more likely to say that OA counselors were "very well informed" about the Job Corps program (88 percent) and about the specific center (72 percent). Closer proximity of OA counselors to the center is almost certainly a major reason for this.

TABLE III.14

CENTER DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT OA COUNSELORS' KNOWLEDGE OF JOB CORPS AND OF THEIR CENTER'S PROGRAM

(Percentage of Centers)

	Overall	CCC	Centers Serving Primarily Residential Students	Centers Serving Significant Nonresidential Students
How Well OA Staff Are Informed About Job Corps Program				
Very well	58	43	52	88
Somewhat	39	53	44	12
Not very well	3	3	4	0
How Well OA Staff Are Informed About the Program Specifically Offered by Center				
Very well	43	33	35	72
Somewhat	51	63	57	24
Not very well	6	3	7	4

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Job Corps Center Mail Survey.

IV. CENTER OPERATIONS: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The cornerstone of the Job Corps program is center operations, and the three pillars of center operations are vocational education, academic education, and residential living. The vocational education program aims to provide young men and women with the occupational skills necessary to obtain a job that will start them on a promising career path. This chapter describes the vocational education component of center operations.

We first present the philosophy and broad operational guidelines of the program. Drawing on data from the 23 center visits and the center mail survey, the next three sections describe the organization of the program, the occupational areas available in Job Corps, and the relevance of Job Corps' training to today's labor market and the experiences of recent Job Corps terminees. The last six sections describe specific elements of the program, focusing on the Occupational Exploration Program (OEP), the assignment of students to particular trades, the scheduling of students' training, Vocational Skills Training (VST) projects, the Work Experience Program (WEP), and advanced training programs.

A. PHILOSOPHY OF JOB CORPS VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

From its inception, Job Corps vocational and academic programs have used an open-entry, open-exit approach that permits students with varying skill levels to enter classes at different times and then to progress at their own pace. While this operating guideline creates logistical challenges, it accommodates the wide range of skills and learning styles of Job Corps students. This design allows Job Corps to provide individualized competency-based training that develops the specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for job placement.

A second guiding principle of the vocational education program is its emphasis on "hands-on" learning and "learning by doing" in all occupational areas. Vocational training is provided through a combination of classroom instruction and instructor-guided hands-on experiences. Classroom instruction covers safety practices, reading of occupation-specific technical materials, and lectures on occupational practices. It often involves applying academic skills to the trade: for example, the classroom component in carpentry makes extensive use of applied math necessary for routine tasks, such as taking measurements, reading blueprints, and estimating quantities of materials.

Guidelines specify that over 70 percent of vocational instruction time should be devoted to hands-on experiences through in-classroom simulations of occupational practices, VST projects, and, to the extent possible, WEP placements. Classroom simulations of actual work-related tasks are performed under the direct supervision of the instructor. For instance, to master specific techniques, students in bricklaying will build a brick wall, dismantle it, and then reconstruct it. VST projects entail construction or renovation of facilities on centers or other public lands, and they typically involve several trades. For example, as part of a VST project to refurbish living quarters, carpentry students will erect walls, floor-laying students will install the floor, and students in painting will paint the walls. WEP placements enable students in health, clerical, retail sales, other trades involving delivery of services, and in some cases construction trades, to gain hands-on experience in a workplace setting under the supervision of an employer.

The third defining feature of the Job Corps vocational education program is its emphasis on competency-based instruction. Each program follows a prescribed plan of activities as outlined in student activity guides (SAGs). Each SAG also includes criterion-referenced measurements that are used to describe and verify student competencies in each of the skills required of an entry-level position in an occupation. Job Corps develops SAGs with extensive input from business, industry, and labor organizations. The instructor documents each student's progress in achieving occupational competencies in the Training Achievement Record (TAR). The TAR for each trade is a checklist of the competencies deemed essential by business, industry, and labor organizations for successful performance of the duties of different occupations. The TAR is used to certify a student leaving vocational education as a trainee, a completer, or an advanced completer, each category representing a progression of competencies that higher-skilled jobs in an occupational area require.

Finally, the Job Corps vocational program emphasizes the involvement of business, industry, and labor organizations. As noted, representatives from these organizations help develop and refine the SAGs and the TARs, which constitute the core of the program. In addition, each Job Corps center must establish and maintain an active Vocational Advisory Committee made up of representatives of the local employer, labor, and vocational training communities to advise the center director about the operation of a center's vocational programs.

B. ORGANIZATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Job Corps center operators provide both the facilities and the instructors for most vocational training. In this situation, a vocational manager, usually reporting directly to the center director, is responsible for hiring, training, and supervising instructional staff and for allocating budgets for equipment and materials in the various trades. Vocational education is provided as part of the center operator's contract. However, two other arrangements for delivering vocational training are used extensively in Job Corps.

First, the National Office contracts with several national organizations to provide instructors in selected vocations. Training is provided in center facilities, but the vocational instructors are employees of the national contractor rather than of the center operator. These national contractors, mostly trade union organizations, include the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of

America, the International Masonry Institute, the National Plasterers and Cement Masons International Association, the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades, the United Auto Workers, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Home Builders Institute, the Transportation-Communication International Union, and the Appalachian Council of the AFL/CIO. These organizations provide instructors in building and apartment maintenance, carpentry, electrician, floor laying, heavy equipment operation, masonry, painting, plumbing, and welding. The national contractor instructors are generally craftspersons with substantial experience and knowledge of industry practices. Both contract centers and CCCs have trades taught by one of the national contractors. The mix of center-operated and national contractor-operated trade offerings varies widely.

National training contractors provide skilled instructors, strong linkages to industry, and national networks that create job placement opportunities for students. However, center staff reported that having instructors employed by someone else often created operational difficulties for the center. For example, if an instructor is having performance problems, the center operator can discuss the matter directly with the instructor, but only the national contractor has the authority to take personnel actions. The lack of direct management control leads to some unresolved difference of opinions between instructors and center administrators in decisions about how to use VST funds to balance the training benefits to students and enhance the center facility. Differences in employee compensation also pose issues. Most national training contractor employees are union members who receive union wages and benefits, whereas center employees are not necessarily union members. Therefore, vocational instructors with similar levels of skill and experience can receive very different compensation, resulting in tensions between staff and administrators and among vocational instructors.

Center administrators said the use of national contractors hindered their ability to manage their centers effectively. Many suggested that better coordination between the National Office and regional offices and the establishment of a mechanism for center operators and national contractors to address these problems cooperatively would help to improve the relationship between center operators and national contractors.

A second, less widely used, arrangement for providing vocational education is contracting with an off-center training supplier for both the facilities and instructors in one or more areas. This approach has become more prevalent in recent years.[1] Overall, about 1 in 10 trades is offered by an off-center training provider, although the percentage of all slots offered off center is just under two percent. A great deal of variation across centers exists in the use of this arrangement: while virtually none of the CCCs use it, over 20 percent of the occupational training courses at private, significantly nonresidential centers are offered through off-center programs.

Staff at centers using off-center training providers reported that the key benefit is to give students access to a broader range of vocational offerings than the center is able to provide. One urban center contracts with a local public education agency for a specified number of training positions at a local vocational-technical institute, and the center's students may enroll in any of the wide array of vocational programs that have an opening. Another primary reason to use outside trainers is to provide students access to advanced career-training opportunities at local community colleges and technical institutes.

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[1] The increase in off-center training represents a significant shift from the original design of Job Corps, particularly at centers with nonresidential students, where the student may not live at the center and may receive vocational training off center as well. In these instances, however, nonresidential students typically receive Job Corps academic education services, counseling, and other services on center.

While the use of off-center training providers expands opportunities for students, scheduling of vocational classes often is a problem. Many of the off-center programs do not mesh with the open-entry, open-exit structure of Job Corps. Community colleges, for example, generally follow a regular academic schedule, with classes beginning and ending on fixed dates. Centers have accommodated these rigid schedules by rescheduling other required activities to permit students to enroll in outside training programs.

C. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AREAS

Job Corps offers vocational education in approximately 75 trades nationwide. The specific offerings at a center are based on the potential for placing both male and female students in entry-level jobs related to their training and likely to lead to upward mobility. Each center offers a much smaller number of trades (10 to 11 on average), with considerable variation across types of centers and across individual centers.[2] On average, CCCs offer 8.4 occupational trades per center, private primarily residential centers offer 11.5, and significantly nonresidential centers offer 9.3.

Most vocational instruction (over 95 percent) is provided in 22 broad occupational areas. Table IV.1 shows all the trade groupings that contained at least 100 training slots nationwide at the time of the study. The number of slots represents the potential number of Job Corps students who can be enrolled and participating in the corresponding vocational training program on any given day.[3]

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[2] At the center level, one satellite center offers only one occupational training area (business clerical occupations) to a narrowly defined population of nonresidential students--almost exclusively single mothers--in a major metropolitan area. At the other extreme, a large contract center offers 26 trades. At CCCs, the number of offerings ranges from 6 and 12 trades, while at most contract centers the number ranges from 5 to 20.

[3] The number of training slots is not the same as center capacity, because not all students are enrolled in a vocational trade on any given day (for example, students are not assigned a vocational trade until after orientation).

TABLE IV.1

JOB CORPS VOCATIONAL TRADE OFFERINGS WITH 100 OR MORE TRAINING SLOTS

Vocational Training Area	Number of Slots	Percentage of Slots
Clerical Occupations	7,435	19.7
Health Occupations	4,642	12.3
Carpentry	3,168	8.4
Masonry	2,932	7.8
Building and Apartment Maintenance	2,775	7.4
Food Service	2,569	6.8
Mechanic	2,182	5.8
Welding	2,153	5.7
Painter	1,594	4.2
Electrician Trainee	1,227	3.3
Salesperson	998	2.6
Forestry/Landscaping	749	2.0
Plumber	671	1.8
Computer Support Specialist	519	1.4
Computer Operator	480	1.3
Security Officer	436	1.2
Heavy Equipment Operator	392	1.0
Lithographic Printer	332	0.9
Hotel Clerk	255	0.7
Child Day Care Center Worker	142	0.4
Dispensing Optician	120	0.3
Floor Layer	100	0.3
Advanced Career Training	483	1.3
Off-Center Training, Unknown	657	1.7
All Other Trades	691	1.8
All Vocational Areas	**37,702**	

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

Several specific vocational trades have been combined in this table into a broader grouping of occupational training areas for presentation purposes. For example, auto repair technician and diesel mechanic are grouped together in the occupational area labeled mechanic.

Clerical occupations is by far the largest vocational training area in Job Corps, with 7,435 training slots (20 percent of available slots), followed by health occupations, with 4,642 slots (12 percent). There are 483 advanced career training slots and 657 available off-center training slots that represent a number of different trades, depending upon the particular advanced or off-center program students choose. In addition, the remaining 30 or so other trades with less than 100 training slots total 691, or about 2 percent of the total available training slots.

D. ENSURING THAT JOB CORPS VOCATIONAL TRAINING MEETS EMPLOYER NEEDS

Job Corps seeks to prepare students for entry-level jobs that offer avenues for advancement in their field. Achieving this objective requires that training be offered in occupations for which employers need entry-level workers. This section describes how Job Corps updates training offerings and ensures that the curriculum and facilities used in each trade are appropriate. To provide insights on the areas in which Job Corps offerings are likely to increase and decrease, we also present data comparing the number of Job Corps slots with projections of job openings and recent placement rates in various trade areas.

1. Updating Vocational Offerings

Center operators are expected to review vocational education offerings periodically. If they determine that a vocational offering should be added or deleted, the center director requests a trade change from the regional office and provides documentation supporting the need for the change, the feasibility of it, and the costs. If the regional office agrees, it forwards the request to the National

Office, which must approve all increases and decreases in the number of slots offered at each trade at each center. This process applies only to the center-operated trades. The National Office decides how many vocational training slots each national contractor will offer at each center. Center directors have a lesser role in determining the number of national contractor slots that will be offered at their center, since the number must be negotiated with the contractor and national office.

Center vocational managers told us how they assessed the need for changes in vocational education offerings. The most widely cited factor is the placement rate of students. If it is unacceptably low in a trade, the vocational manager will consider proposing to reduce or delete the trade. Many vocational managers also cited labor market surveys or information from the vocational advisory committee about changes in the labor market as sources of information that could prompt consideration of deleting a trade or reducing the number of slots. Information from formal and informal labor market surveys is also considered in selecting new trades, as is student interest. Some managers also cited as an important consideration their staff's judgments about the potential for students to complete the course successfully. For example, one vocational manager mentioned that ensuring a mix of trades with varied skill levels (some challenging, some less challenging) was a very important consideration in proposing to add or delete a trade. Another said the center had dropped automechanics because academic requirements had become more stringent as the trade became more automated, and students were no longer able to complete it successfully. Several respondents also mentioned the need to find trades that appeal to young women as considerations in assessing their offerings. Finally, the availability and cost of facilities and equipment to teach a new trade are a major factor considered by reviewers of proposals at all levels of the process.

Vocational advisory groups appear to play a limited role in identifying new trades. Although a few respondents mentioned specific examples in which the groups had influenced the center's decision, most reported little committee involvement in this area. One center offered as an explanation the fact that because the vocational advisory committee was drawn from the local area, whereas students came from urban centers several hundred miles away, the committee members did not know much about the labor markets to which students would be returning. This same consideration is likely to apply for most CCCs and many primarily residential centers. Overall, the interviews suggest that the vocational advisory committees play a significant role in ensuring that up-to-date techniques are taught, that equipment needs are identified, and that work experience slots are arranged, but that their role in adjusting trade offerings is small.

The recent experience of the centers we visited indicates that the process of changing vocational offerings--especially initiating training in trades not previously taught at a center--moves very slowly. A small fraction of the centers we visited had recently added a new vocational offering. Just less than one-fifth reported that they had recently stopped offering certain trades and had added one or more new ones. The same percentage said they had dropped poor-performing trades but had increased the number of slots in existing courses rather than opening new courses to take the place of the ones that were closed. Several centers either were planning to request adding and deleting specific trades or had done so in the recent past, but the Job Corps regional offices had rejected their proposal. Indeed, one center that had started a new trade reported that the regional office had rejected six other proposed changes. The trades added included auto body repair, retail sales, health occupations, business clerical, security, and hotel clerk. The trades that respondents were considering adding included masonry, plastering, computer repair, dental assistant, retail sales, and "gaming." The vocational offerings deleted were for security, masonry, horticulture, heavy equipment, cement finishing, welding, metal fabrication, telecommunications, auto mechanic, groundskeeper, and appliance repair. About 40 percent of the centers we visited neither had changed their trade offerings recently nor stated an intention to change them soon.

Vocational managers identified several obstacles to changing trade offerings, some that were programmatic. Several emphasized that adding a trade requires extensive documentation of need, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness. Applications must be reviewed and approved at the center director, corporate, regional office, and National Office levels--a process than can take up to three years. The extensive documentation and long approval process made center staff disinclined to pursue changes. In centers where national contractors and center-based trades are both offered, the slowness to change national contractor trades indirectly slows change in center-offered trades. One vocational manager said that placing the trades offered by the national contractors outside the review process made it difficult to eliminate poorly performing center-offered trades when similarly poorly performing national contractor trades were "untouchable." The reports of these managers suggest a strong and widely held perception that altering existing trade offerings is difficult.

2. Projected Future Openings in Current Job Corps Trades

To gauge the extent to which Job Corps' vocational training programs correspond to the occupations that are likely to be in high demand in the near future, we compared the projected annual number of entry-level openings in trades for which Job Corps trains with the current number of slots open. Occupational projections for the nation and nearly all states covering the period 1994 to 2005 were obtained from America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS).[4]

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[4] The occupational projections database we obtained from ALMIS contained projections for the United States overall and separately for 47 states and the District of Columbia. ALMIS did not contain occupational projection data for Indiana, New York, Texas, or Puerto Rico. To develop a more complete picture of the occupations that are likely to be in high demand over the next several years, we supplemented the ALMIS data with state-level occupational projections from Indiana (continued...)

To provide a meaningful comparison, we first identified all occupations in the ALMIS projections that correspond to the skill and training level of Job Corps students. A listing of the 50 occupational titles with the highest average annual number of job openings that best match the skill and training levels of Job Corps students is presented in Appendix Table B.17.[5] We then applied the same rules Job Corps uses for determining whether students' placements are a job-training match in order to connect each Job Corps vocational training area with the appropriate ALMIS occupation.[6] Table IV.2 shows, for the 22 Job Corps occupational training areas with 100 or more training slots, as reported in Table IV.1, the estimated average annual number of job openings (AANJO) nationwide in all matched occupational titles from ALMIS, as well as the percentage of the projected annual number of job openings represented by Job Corps training slots. These 22 Job Corps occupational training areas have 35,871 training slots, while the corresponding occupational titles are projected to have 1,630,160 job openings per year. If Job Corps trained one student per year in each training slot, students trained in these areas would represent 2.2 percent of the total number of job openings in related occupations. We use this measure of Job Corps slots as a percentage of

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[4](...continued)
(covering the period 1990 to 2005), New York (1995 through 1998), Texas (1993 through 2000), and Puerto Rico (1994 through 2005).

[5] This listing of occupations was developed after excluding all occupational titles that were classified as requiring an associate's degree or higher as the minimal level of training from the ALMIS database, under the assumption that Job Corps students could not qualify for openings in these occupations without further education or training.

[6] The Job Corps process for determining a job-training match relies on an established relationship between the Dictionary of Occupation Title (DOT) codes and the codes for vocational programs contained in the U.S. Department of Education's Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP). The occupational codes reported in the ALMIS projections were translated into OES codes with the crosswalk between DOT and OES codes that was developed by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC). We carefully examined the results from applying this crosswalk and deleted any potential mismatches between the DOT codes and corresponding OES before calculating the average annual number of job openings reported here.

TABLE IV.2

PROJECTED AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF JOB OPENINGS IN RELATED OCCUPATIONS FOR JOB CORPS VOCATIONAL TRADE OFFERINGS WITH 100 OR MORE TRAINING SLOTS

Vocational Training Area	Average Annual Number of Job Openings (AANJO)	Job Corps Training Slots as a Percentage of AANJO
Clerical Occupations	278,410	2.7
Health Occupations	122,390	3.8
Carpentry	26,350	12.0
Masonry	31,000	9.5
Building and Apartment Maintenance	149,770	1.9
Food Service	220,290	1.2
Mechanic	61,070	3.6
Welding	10,490	20.5
Painter	38,780	4.1
Electrician Trainee	35,630	3.4
Salesperson	366,880	0.3
Forestry/Landscaping	23,160	3.2
Plumber	30,230	2.2
Computer Support Specialist	12,000	4.3
Computer Operator	7,340	6.5
Security Officer	77,360	0.6
Heavy Equipment Operator	17,260	2.3
Lithographic Printer	4,480	7.4
Hotel Clerk	63,660	0.4
Child Day Care Worker	29,210	0.5
Dispensing Optician	2,580	4.7
Floor Layer	21,820	0.5

SOURCE: Data on occupational projections are from ALMIS. Data on Job Corps training slots are from the National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

projected openings to assess which occupations might warrant expansion and which might encounter difficulties placing students.

The data in Table IV.2 present a mixed picture of the match between the vocational training areas offered by Job Corps and the projected annual number of openings for entry-level workers. A large number of job openings is projected in several of the vocational training areas offered by Job Corps, and students trained in these areas would fill only a small percentage of the expected annual number of job openings. The clerical occupations, health occupations, building and apartment maintenance, food service, and salesperson areas are all expected to have over 100,000 job openings during each of the next several years. The number of training slots in Job Corps represents less than four percent of the projected AANJO in each of these high-demand occupations. In addition, the number of Job Corps training slots in security officer, hotel clerk, child day care worker, and floor layer represents less than two percent of the projected AANJO.

Some of Job Corps' larger vocational training areas are expected to have limited numbers of job openings over the next few years. Welding, computer support specialist, computer operator, lithographic printer, and dispensing optician are all expected to have fewer than 20,000 job openings per year nationwide. In addition, if placed in a related job, the Job Corps students trained in several of the larger training areas would need to fill a relatively large percentage of the total number of job openings. For example, the more than 2,000 training slots in Job Corps welding programs represent more than 20 percent of the expected AANJO in related occupations that require less than an associate's degree. Similarly, the number of training slots in carpentry, masonry, computer operator, and lithographic printer all represent more than 5 percent of the projected AANJO in related occupations.

We also examined vocational training slots relative to projected job openings at regional and state levels, and found very similar patterns (see Appendix Tables B.18 and B.19).

The data presented in Table IV.2 and in the appendix indicate that in a number of Job Corps vocational offerings, projected demand is low relative to the numbers of students that Job Corps trains. Welding, carpentry, masonry, lithographic printer, computer operator, computer support specialist, and dispensing optician follow this pattern. The data also indicate that Job Corps could expand the number of training slots in building and apartment maintenance, food service, sales, security officer, hotel clerk, child day care worker, and floor layer, trades in which the number of training slots is less than 2 percent of projected AANJO. Interestingly, the recent changes in trade offerings that were made (or considered) at the centers we visited are broadly consistent with the directions suggested by this analysis.

3. Placement Rates by Vocational Training Area

The Job Corps performance measurement system uses rates of placement and rates of placement into training-related jobs as important measures for assessing center operators' and placement agencies' performance. In this section, we compare rates of placement and rates of placement into training-related jobs across vocational training as indicators of how the various trades are performing. These data complement those presented in the past section on projected openings. Table IV.3 presents, for all terminees enrolled in the corresponding vocational training area, the percentage of program year (PY) 1996 terminees who were reported in SPAMIS to have been placed in a job, the percentage who were placed in a training-related job, and the relative rankings of the trades on each measure.

Before discussing the data in this table, we must caution about some potential limitations of the comparison. First, comparing placement rates across trades does not take into account differences

TABLE IV.3

PLACEMENT RATES AND JOB TRAINING MATCHES FOR JOB CORPS VOCATIONAL TRADE OFFERINGS WITH 100 OR MORE TRAINING SLOTS

(Percentage)

	Percentage of Program Year 1996 Terminees		Rank Among Trades in	
Vocational Training Area	Placed in a Job	Placed in a Related Job	Percentage Placed in a Job	Percentage Placed in a Related Job
Clerical Occupations	70.1	49.8	16	8
Health Occupations	72.5	40.6	10	15
Carpentry	75.0	51.8	5	4
Masonry	70.6	46.6	15	10
Building and Apartment Maintenance	71.8	50.4	12	7
Food Service	69.2	52.9	18	2
Mechanic	73.3	43.9	8	14
Welding	74.0	45.4	7	12
Painter	71.9	46.2	11	11
Electrician Trainee	74.9	50.6	6	6
Salesperson	71.3	51.5	13	5
Forestry/Landscaping	72.9	40.4	9	16
Plumber	75.9	52.9	4	3
Computer Support Specialist	61.0	36.6	22	19
Computer Operator	68.2	53.6	19	1
Security Officer	77.0	32.7	3	22
Heavy Equipment Operator	78.1	48.4	1	9
Lithographic Printer	71.1	34.0	14	21
Hotel Clerk	63.7	44.1	20	13
Child Day Care Worker	69.5	34.8	17	20
Dispensing Optician	77.9	36.9	2	18
Floor Layer	63.3	38.3	21	17

SOURCE: Tabulations of data from Job Corps SPAMIS.

NOTE: Program Year 1996 is the period July 1, 1996, to June 30, 1997.

in the abilities and qualifications of students enrolling in the different trades. To the extent that students enrolled in some trades are more able than students in others, comparisons of placement rates across trades do not fairly reflect the value added of the different trades. Second, SPAMIS data on job-training matches are collected and entered by people who have a stake in the outcomes, and these data have not been subjected to independent third-party assessment. Although Job Corps uses well-defined criteria that map DOT codes for the job to vocational-training areas, the DOT code entered in SPAMIS is entered by a placement agency staff member who talked with former students or employers about the nature of the job. The decision about which DOT code applies to the job necessarily requires judgment by the placement agency staff. At the same time, the agency's performance is assessed in part through the percentage of students who obtain a job related to their training. For this reason, the information reported in SPAMIS may overstate the number of training-related placements and may do so to differing (but unknown) degrees for different vocational-training areas.

As Table IV.3 shows, the rankings of the various trades differ markedly according to whether placement in a job or placement in a training-related job is the criterion. While this pattern is not surprising given the two performance measures are specifically designed to measure different dimensions of contractor performance, it does limit our ability to draw conclusions about the strength of the trades, since it is not clear which measure should be used when the two measures diverge. Interestingly, several trades stand out as ranking above the median on both placement measures (heavy equipment operator, plumber, electrician, carpentry) and several stand out as ranking below the median on both measures (lithographic printer, child day care, hotel clerk, floor layer, and computer support specialist). A few trades show high rates of placement in training-related jobs but low rates of placement overall (clerical, food service, sales, and computer operator).

A few show low rates of placement in training-related jobs but high rates of placement overall (dispensing optician, security officer).

The data on placements confirm some of the directions suggested by projections on job openings and contradict others. Data on job openings suggested that Job Corps was training too many students in the areas of lithographic printer computer and support specialist, and these trades have low placement rates. Job openings for dispensing opticians also are limited, and while rates of placement in training-related jobs are low, overall placement rates are high. Similarly, the data on projections suggested ample opportunities in building and apartment maintenance, food service, and sales, and the data on training-related placements support this (although overall placements in these trades are relatively low).

The data placements also contradict some of the findings on the number of job openings. Although Job Corps appears to be training a large percentage of new entry-level workers in carpentry, masonry, and welding, these trades have relatively low numbers of openings but high training-related placement rates; indeed, carpentry has one of the four highest rates. Moreover, child day care workers and security officers have some of the lowest rates of job-training match (and overall placement), although the data on projected openings suggested that these vocational areas were good candidates for expanding Job Corps offerings.

There are several possible explanations for the divergent findings on openings and placement rates. First, placement agencies may have well-established relationships with employers in the occupational areas where Job Corps has historically provided training. Indeed, national training contractors provide instructors in several of the trades with high placement rates--heavy equipment operators, plumbing, carpentry, electrician, and welding--and these contractors may have better than average opportunities to place their students in related jobs through existing industry or union relationships. Second, differences in placement rates may reflect differences in the ability of students enrolling in the various trades.

4. Center Administrators' Perceptions About Whether Vocational Training Equipment and Materials Meet Industry Standards

The extent to which Job Corps' vocational training offerings meet current labor market needs also depends on whether the training meets industry standards for entry-level workers. While the Job Corps process study did not attempt to assess the overall quality of specific vocational training offerings, we attempted to collect, through the survey, center staffs' perceptions about the relative strength of one dimension of training quality. In particular, we asked centers whether the equipment and materials used in each trade meet current industry standards. Responses indicate that, overall, center staff believe that almost 93 percent of their vocational offerings have equipment and materials that meet current industry standards for training programs in the relevant occupations.

Table IV.4 shows the vocational education areas that center staff identified as not meeting current industry standards for equipment and materials. A small, but noteworthy, percentage of centers offering the largest trades in Job Corps are using equipment and materials that do not meet industry standards, including clerical occupations (13 percent), health occupations (4 percent), carpentry (5 percent), building and apartment maintenance (3 percent), and food service (6 percent). Some of the training areas listed in this table also correspond to the occupational areas that are expected to have high levels of demand over the next few years--such as clerical occupations, health occupations, food service, salesperson, security officer, and hotel clerk. To exploit the labor market for these occupations, Job Corps will need to invest in up-to-date equipment and materials.

TABLE IV.4

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AREAS IN WHICH CENTER STAFF BELIEVE EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS DO NOT MEET CURRENT INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Training Area	Percentage of Centers Offering Trade That Report Equipment and Materials Do Not Meet Standards
Clerical Occupations	13
Health Occupations	4
Carpentry	5
Masonry	1
Building and Apartment Maintenance	3
Food Service	6
Mechanic	4
Welding	2
Painter	4
Electrician Trainee	3
Salesperson	19
Forestry/Landscaping	0
Plumber	0
Computer Support Specialist	0
Computer Operator	0
Security Officer	6
Heavy Equipment Operator	0
Lithographic Printer	15
Hotel Clerk	11
Child Day Care Worker	0
Dispensing Optician	0
Floor Layer	0

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

E. OCCUPATIONAL EXPLORATION PROGRAM (OEP)

The OEP is designed to expose new students to the full range of vocational offerings available at the center soon after enrollment so that they can select a trade during their first few weeks on center. OEP helps students examine their occupational interests, assess their abilities to perform the tasks required in each vocational training area, explore the job opportunities within each vocational area, and, taking these three factors together, make an informed career training choice. All new students must participate in OEP, except for the small number who are referred directly to Job Corps by one of the national training contractors.

The 23 centers visited for the process study used a variety of approaches to help students assess their occupational interests. Nearly all the centers we visited were using one of several commercially available interest assessment tools, such as the Career Orientation Placement and Evaluation Survey, the Career Ability Placement Survey, and the Pictorial Interest Exploration Survey. However, nearly all OEP staff expressed dissatisfaction with these tools, questioning both whether they were appropriate given the reading level of many Job Corps students and whether they justified the time required to administer them. OEP instructors expressed interest in learning more about computer-based occupational interest assessment tools, but most believed the National Office would need to exercise leadership if these tools were to be adopted.

As part of OEP, students receive an overview and tour of all the trades offered at their center. First, all vocational training instructors make presentations describing the content of each occupational training area and giving information about jobs that students in these areas enter. Structured hands-on experience in a small number of trades follows, in preparation for vocational counseling and personal goal-setting. Structured hands-on experience helps students understand what knowledge, skills, and attitudes are necessary for success.

OEP staff use the results of the formal assessments, as well as observation of student performance during hands-on activities, to assist students in making appropriate selections. OEP culminates in preparation of an individual employability development plan (EDP) that is updated over time.

OEP generally lasts from 8 to 14 days in most centers (73 percent), although shorter and longer periods are used in some centers. Almost two-thirds of Job Corps centers reported that students usually engage in structured exploration of three trades, with another 27 percent reporting that students usually explore four trades and 9 percent reporting only one or two trades. More than half of centers (55 percent) report that students spend more than eight hours in hands-on experience per trade explored. Ten percent of centers report six to eight hours of hands-on experience per trade, 17 percent report four to six hours, and 19 percent report less than four hours. For the most part, student choice guides the selection of which trades to explore through the structured hands-on experience, although 20 percent of centers overall reported that staff guidance was the primary mechanism for choosing vocations to explore.

F. ASSIGNMENT TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING AREAS

At the completion of OEP, students are assigned to a vocational training area, typically within two weeks after arrival at the center. Forty-one percent of all centers reported that vocational training begins within two weeks, with an additional 34 percent of centers reporting that it begins within three weeks. The remaining 25 percent reported that it starts more than three weeks after students arrive. In all centers, students are placed in a specific vocational trade no later than 30 calendar days from the date of arrival.

Each student's assignment to a vocational trade depends on several factors: the student's preference, staff's assessment of the student's abilities, entry requirements of specific trades, and availability of space. The center survey indicates that centers are about evenly split in the weight they give to student preferences and staff guidance in assigning a student to a trade. Just over half (57 percent) report that student preferences are the primary determinant of the vocational trade assignment, and just under half (43 percent) report that staff primarily guide students in their selection. Over 90 percent said that staff advise students to select another trade if they believe the student would not do well in the occupational area initially selected.

Trade-specific entry criteria may also prevent students from entering their preferred trade. The center, national training contractors, and off-center training providers all may set criteria for specific trades. Centers report that 27 percent of the trades they offer require a student to meet at least one criterion to enroll in the trade. The use of entry criteria varies across centers, with some not using entry criteria for any of their trade offerings and one that reported having entry criteria for every offering. The use of entry criteria varied across centers for the same trade; some trades had entry criteria at one center but not at others.

These trade-specific entry requirements typically include minimum age, absence of certain medical conditions, minimum math and reading scores on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), high school diploma or GED, driver's license, and approval by the trade union. Although the specific entry criteria for any given trade can vary across centers, they were very similar at most centers that applied them. For example, construction-related trades, such as carpentry, masonry, painting, and welding, often imposed both an age restriction (no students under 17) and a minimum-score requirement in reading and/or math on students' initial TABE. At the 23 centers visited, off-center training providers were more likely to impose entry requirements related to reading and math abilities or a high school diploma or GED.

In an open-entry, open-exit system, maintaining a balance between the number of new students wanting to enter a trade and the number of slots becoming available is a constant challenge. Inevitably, some students wish to enter trades that are already filled to capacity. In these situations, centers place students on a waiting list. Over 90 percent of all centers reported using waiting lists, and 12 percent of trades were reported to have a waiting list of four weeks or longer (with an average of eight weeks). The vocational training areas most commonly reported to have waiting lists are clerical occupations, health occupations, food service, building and apartment maintenance, carpentry, and other construction-related trades. Although some centers informed students of waiting lists before they arrived (for example, through screeners, pre-arrival telephone calls, or the introductory letter), most reported that students learned about specific waiting lists after coming to the center, usually during orientation or OEP.

Centers with waiting lists for trades used different approaches for making sure students' training time during the wait was productive. Most centers (78 percent) reported that students usually enrolled in their second choice or another trade if their first-choice trade was full. The remaining 22 percent said that students were allowed to wait for their first choice by filling their class schedule either with other required classes or with "make-work" activities. Among the 23 site visit centers that permitted students to wait, this option seemed to depend on the length of the expected wait for a training slot. Some centers allowed students to wait if the period was expected to be no more than one or two weeks, while others allowed students to wait four to six weeks. A small number of centers reported that they temporarily exceeded the number of training slots allocated to vocational areas in order to accommodate students whose first-choice trade was already operating at capacity.

Students who must enroll in their second- or third-choice trade are generally counseled to enroll in a related trade so what they learn can be applied to their first-choice vocation if and when they transfer into it. These students usually have the option of switching into their preferred trade when a slot becomes available. However, to ensure that students have benefited from the time spent in the alternative vocational area, a few centers required students to reach a step-off level in their initial trade before transferring to their first-choice trade. Also, while most centers give students on the waiting list preference when slots open, one center reported that each instructor decided whether slots vacated by graduating students would be filled by new students or by students currently assigned to another trade. Most of the centers we visited reported that although students often have the option of changing into their first-choice trade when a slot opens, many choose to remain in their current program and complete the trade they started rather than switch trades.

In most centers, students may request a change in their vocational assignment, and procedures for handling these requests vary across centers. Some require that students remain in the current trade for some minimum time (such as 30 days) before they can change in order to discourage students from switching trades every time they encounter a difficulty either with the material or with the instructor. Centers may also require approval of the change by the current and prospective instructor, P/PEP approval, successful completion of step-off levels, and good standing in the current trade. The reasons most commonly cited for denying a request to change trades were performance in the current trade or attendance problems.

Table IV.5 presents data on the number of vocational trades in which terminees in Program Year 1996 participated. Approximately 17 percent of students are never assigned to a vocational trade. This group is composed almost entirely of students who leave a center within the first 30 to 45 days, at a point before they would normally be assigned to a trade. About two-thirds of students enroll in only one vocational training area during their stay in Job Corps. Just under 20 percent enroll in two areas, and less than one percent enroll in three. The group entering more than one vocation reflects

TABLE IV.5

ENROLLMENT IN DIFFERENT VOCATIONAL TRAINING AREAS AMONG TERMINEES IN PROGRAM YEAR 1996

Percentage of Students with	Overall	CCC	Private Residential	Private Significant Nonresidential
No Trade Assigned	17	19	16	16
1 Trade Assigned	65	67	63	69
2 Trades Assigned	18	14	20	15
3 Trades Assigned	0	0	0	0

SOURCE: Tabulations from SPAMIS.

NOTE: Program Year 1996 is the period July 1, 1996, to June 30, 1997.

both the switches from second- to first-choice vocations and midstream changes because the initial trade was unsatisfactory. A few centers also reported that students were encouraged to enroll in a second course after completing their first one as a way of ensuring that the center operated near capacity.

G. SCHEDULING OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Students are scheduled for education and vocational training based on a system in which the mix of training is such that the student derives the maximum benefit consistent with his or her abilities. Most students are initially assigned to a 50 percent education and 50 percent vocational training schedule; however, exceptions are made based on education level and initial TABE scores. Students with a high school diploma or GED who meet minimum competencies in reading and math may be assigned to schedules with 20 to 30 percent education and 70 to 80 percent vocational training. Students with reading or English deficiencies may be assigned to 70 to 80 percent education and 20 to 30 percent vocational training.

The method of achieving the desired mix of academic and vocational classes varies across centers and trades. The most common methods are the "week on/week off" and the "half-day" schedules. In the former, students alternate one week of academic classes with one week of vocational training. In the latter, students spend either the morning or the afternoon in academic classes, with the rest of the day spent in vocational training. In many centers, the schedule may depend on the trade.

Data from the mail survey show that 39 percent of centers use a week on/week off schedule for all their trades, 8 percent use a half-day schedule for all their trades, and the remaining 53 percent use a mixed schedule. Among centers using the mixed approach, approximately half their trades were using a week on/week off schedule. Week on/week off schedules were much more widely used in the construction trades, while trades such as clerical occupations and health occupations were much more likely to be using half-day schedules.

Discussions with center staff highlighted several advantages and disadvantages of the two scheduling approaches. Vocational instructors in the construction trades (such as carpentry, masonry, painting, plastering, and welding) generally prefer the week on/week off approach because of the extensive time students need to prepare for the training day. They also said this approach more closely approximated real-world work situations. On the other hand, nearly all academic instructors and some vocational instructors said that a full week away from academics or certain occupational training areas caused students to forget what they had learned. Several of the centers we visited had adopted the mixed scheduling approach as a way of balancing the advantages and disadvantages of the two methods. Despite the logistical difficulties in scheduling students and balancing workloads of academic instructors, they firmly believed the benefits to the students were worth the trouble.

H. VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING (VST) PROJECTS

VST projects provide vocational instruction through actual construction or improvement of facilities on center or in the community. VST projects result in a finished product, but their primary focus is student learning. They are one of the ways Job Corps operationalizes its learning-by-doing instructional approach, and they are the primary means for training students in the construction trades. Many VST projects involve rehabilitation, construction, and maintenance of center facilities. VST projects may also include public service projects for nearby communities, projects related to the conservation of public lands, or projects for other Job Corps centers.

Each center director prepares an annual VST plan, which forms the basis for receiving funds to purchase materials and equipment for VST projects. For each proposed project, VST plans detail the cost factors, the appraised value of completed products, and the hours of training provided for students in different trades. The center director submits the VST plan to the Job Corps regional office for approval. While the regional office can generally approve a center's annual VST plans, review and approval at the National Office is required for projects involving major rehabilitation or new construction and for those that request funds in excess of allowable limits.

All students enrolled in a vocational class that is working on a VST project participate under the direct supervision of the vocational instructor. In general, students' work assignments depend on their demonstrated skill levels. Until they receive further training, very new students are usually assigned tasks that do not require specific vocational skills (such as moving materials and cleaning up). Advanced students are often assigned to assist newer students or to serve as a type of foreman.

The training areas best suited to conducting VST projects are the building and construction trades: carpentry, painting, building and apartment maintenance, masonry, plastering, welding, plumbing, heavy equipment operations, electrical, glazing, landscaping, and floor laying/tile setting.

According to vocational training staff, successful VST projects have several characteristics. They involve students from several trades working together, they allow individual students to witness an entire project from start to finish, and they require a variety of tasks. Involving several trades more closely simulates real work experiences and requires that students understand how various other trades relate to their own. Also, the experience of working with people in related trades gives students valuable perspective. Projects that result in a completed product relatively quickly are more similar to a real work situation, and they give the students a sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, one center reported that a major construction project, which involved several VST projects and a number of outside contractors, took over 10 years to complete, and most students who worked on it never saw the finished product. Projects that teach students a variety of the skills in their trade were also considered successful. VST projects in which small repetitive tasks are done using the same skills are boring for the students and teach little. A commonly cited unsuccessful VST project involved routine painting of center facilities.

Center staff also identified several challenges to implementing successful VST projects. The most commonly cited obstacles were funding constraints, difficulties in identifying off-center VST projects that meet regulatory requirements for off-center activities, problems with obtaining materials, and the timeliness of required outside consultation. The funds allocated for each student training position for VST projects have not kept pace with inflation, and when delays in the projects occur, centers are often unable to purchase all the materials included in the original budget. Several centers also said that VST funding allocations do not take into account the fact that material costs differ significantly across the different vocational training areas. Off-center VST projects must be within a reasonable travel distance of the center and must not displace any current workers. For remotely located centers, the distance requirement is a problem, and in less remote settings, demonstrating that no displacement will occur is difficult. Many centers, particularly CCCs, report that the procurement process often leads to delays in obtaining necessary materials, which in turn creates further problems for outdoor projects that require good weather. Finally, the process of securing approval from architectural and engineering consultants, as required for major construction or renovation projects, is another commonly cited barrier to smooth implementation of VST projects. The red tape involved in obtaining the necessary approvals entails substantial paperwork for center staff and slows the projects considerably.

I. WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (WEP)

WEP provides students with another avenue for applying the skills they have learned in a real workplace setting. At the time of our site visits, WEP was changing as Job Corps began to emphasize school-to-work activities. The findings reported here describe WEP before that emphasis.

Students are typically assigned to a WEP position once, for a period of up to 30 working days. They spend five hours per day for five days per week at their WEP assignment. Positions are unpaid. Centers try to schedule WEP assignments in the six weeks after completion of a vocational training program and before the exit phase of the program when students prepare to leave the center. A few of the site visit centers imposed criteria in addition to completion of a vocational program for assignment in WEP. One required students to be advanced completers. Others required that students have a high school diploma or GED, receive positive evaluations from center staff, obtain a recommendation from their vocational instructor, and complete the exit phase of the World of Work (WOW) class. In an effort to enhance the value of later instruction, one center assigned students to WEP when they were 80 percent through their vocational training. If students fail to complete their initial WEP assignment, they are usually given one additional opportunity.

WEP assignments can be either on-center or, through arrangements with local employers, off-center. Approximately 85 percent of WEP assignments are off-center. Criteria used in establishing an off-center WEP assignment are designed to ensure that work assignment has training value and that students will be safe while working.

The use of WEP differed across centers. At an average center, about 70 percent of trades had WEP positions available. Yet about 5 percent of centers had no WEP slots, while almost 25 percent had WEP slots available for every trade they offered. This variation in the availability of WEP is closely related to the type and location of the center and trades offered. As one would expect, WEP assignments are most widely available at private centers with significant numbers of nonresidential students in urban areas and are least available at rural CCC centers. Certain trades, particularly clerical occupations, food service, health occupations, and retail sales, are more likely to have WEP assignments. Construction trades seldom have them.

Staff interviewed during the center visits identified several attributes of good WEP assignments. They provide experience in a wide variety of tasks, employers recognize that they are a training activity, and they lead to job offers. In the least successful WEP assignments, employers view students as employees rather than as trainees and assign tasks with little training value. Also a problem were WEP assignments in which the activities involved exceeded students' level of skills. This occurred most often in the clerical occupations, where some programs did not adequately prepare students for the current computer systems and software that employers use. Off-center WEP assignments were considered more successful than on-center assignments, because off-center assignments often lead to good-paying jobs. WEP assignments with large national employers provide students the opportunity to take a job in their home area.

Centers identified several common barriers to finding good off-center WEP assignments. Transportation was cited most often, and many WEP assignments were limited to jobs that could be reached by public transportation. Limited transportation was especially troublesome for centers in remote areas and for WEP assignments with changing job locations (such as construction) or nonstandard hours (such as food service). Lack of time to identify and develop relationships with potential WEP sites, employer concerns about perceived low levels of competence of Job Corps students, and liability issues were also cited as major barriers to finding more good WEP assignments.

J. ADVANCED TRAINING (AT)

The purpose of AT is to provide advanced or specialized educational and vocational training, which is not available to students at all Job Corps centers, to students who have demonstrated the interest and potential to benefit from it. AT opportunities must focus on occupations with good placement potential and must include training that goes well beyond the skills taught in existing center training programs. In addition, AT programs are designed to enhance students' employment prospects substantially.

AT is offered through agreements with accredited vocational schools, community colleges, and other postsecondary educational institutions within commuting distance of Job Corps centers. Students must complete 180 days in Job Corps and have a GED or high school diploma before enrolling. In addition, almost all centers required students to complete a trade before enrolling in an AT program, and they often require students to complete a college preparation course, score above a minimum threshold on standardized college entrance exams, have a good disciplinary record, and complete an interview with center staff who grant approval. Program regulations generally limit enrollment in AT to two years.

Less than 1 percent of all Job Corps students participate in AT programs. According to the National Office, approximately 740 students transferred to such a program in 1996. Of these, 88 percent entered an advanced vocational program, while the remaining 12 percent entered advanced academic programs. Participation was highest among the clerical occupations, which account for over one-third of all such transfers. Advanced cooking and automotive repair technician were also quite prevalent, each accounting for an additional 10 percent of AT assignments.

AT was not available at many of the 23 site visit centers, and several of these centers identified barriers to providing it. One of the most commonly cited was transportation to off-center programs, most of which are located at colleges or other postsecondary educational institutions and are not easily accessible from the center. For example, one center with an off-center AT program required students to live in the college dormitories because of transportation problems. Other barriers included lack of openings in local colleges and difficulties matching the standard academic schedule with Job Corps' open-entry, open-exit program. Another barrier that several centers cited is the lack of adequate preparation of Job Corps students for college courses. One center reported the failure rate for students it sent to off-center AT programs was as high as 25 percent.

V. CENTER OPERATIONS: ACADEMIC EDUCATION

The academic education program offered at Job Corps centers is designed to complement the vocational training program and to provide young men and women with the academic skills necessary for success in their chosen occupations. The basic program offers both reading and mathematics education. In addition, it seeks to move students toward receiving a GED certificate or a high school diploma. The program also includes a number of other courses that are intended to help students develop the skills and knowledge they need to become and remain employed and to function as productive citizens.

This chapter describes the academic education component of center operations at the time of the site visits. The results draw on information collected during the visits, from discussions with teachers and students, from classroom observations, and from SPAMIS and the center mail survey.

We begin with an overview of the philosophy and objectives of the academic program and continue with background on the academic abilities of students entering Job Corps. Next, we describe the core academic education offerings and follow with a discussion of the processes used to assess students' academic abilities and assign them to classes. We then describe the facilities and resources available to support the Job Corps academic programs. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the coordination between the academic and vocational training components in Job Corps.

A. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Job Corps academic program is designed to provide students with the skills they need to function effectively in the workplace or enroll in higher education programs. Providing students with strong skills in reading and math is the core of the program, and all entering students who need help in these areas are enrolled in remedial classes. In addition, the academic education program seeks to help students obtain a GED or a high school diploma, and in some locations postsecondary education opportunities are also available.

The core academic program at each Job Corps center includes the following:

- Reading competencies program, including basic reading and graded reading
- Math competencies program
- Writing/thinking skills program
- GED competencies program

In addition to these core offerings, a number of other classes are intended to help students develop vital skills and knowledge, including World of Work (WOW), cultural awareness and intergroup relations (IGR), parenting, driver education, and health education. Centers that enroll non-English speakers also offer English as a Second Language (ESL).

Together, these courses prepare students to develop constructive employability skills and work attitudes (WOW), provide them with an important tool to increase their employability (driver education), and instruct them in areas that will enhance their physical well-being (health education/alcohol and other drugs) and ability to function as responsible adults in society (parenting and cultural awareness/IGR). All these courses are mandatory, although driver education is required only for students in trades in which the possession of a driver's license is essential. Other students are offered driver education (classroom and on-the-road instruction) at the center's discretion and as resources permit.

The Job Corps basic education program is designed to be flexible and to meet the needs of students with a wide range of knowledge and skills, from nonreaders to students performing at high school equivalency levels. The Job Corps academic education program is self-paced and operates on an open-entry, open-exit basis, so that new students can enroll at any point and progress at their own pace. Each student has individualized goals, objectives, and proficiencies. Job Corps' basic education classes have lower student/teacher ratios (roughly 15 to 1) than traditional public schools to permit this individualized approach to learning.

In offering an academic education program that meets these broad objectives, centers must follow certain policies and procedures established by the Job Corps National Office. Specifically, all centers must use the guides and materials developed for each course. The course guides detail the required student competencies to be attained and the procedures to attain them, as well as the required instructional materials, tests, and record keeping. The use of appropriate supplementary materials is also encouraged to strengthen the program. Before providing details about the academic program, we provide additional background information on the academic abilities of students at entry.

B. ACADEMIC ABILITIES OF STUDENTS AT ENTRY

Job Corps serves an educationally disadvantaged population, with approximately 8 out of 10 students lacking a GED or high school diploma at the time of entry. Such students typically enter Job Corps with substantial academic deficiencies. Even many of the students with a GED or high school diploma need extensive academic remediation to meet the requirements of their trades.

Information on the academic education abilities of Job Corps students at entry is provided in Table V.1. These data are for all students who terminated in 1996, roughly when most students who enrolled in the National Job Corps Study would have left the program. Twenty-two percent of all terminees in 1996 had a GED or high school diploma at entry. Contract centers serve a substantially higher proportion of GED or high school diploma recipients (23 percent, compared to 17 percent for

TABLE V.1

ACADEMIC CHARACTERISTICS AT PROGRAM ENTRY OF JOB CORPS 1996 TERMINEES

	Overall	CCC	Contract Centers	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
GED/HSD at Entry (Percentage)	22	17	23	21	25
Highest Grade Completed at Entry	10.0	9.8	10.1	10.0	10.2
Initial TABE Reading Grade	7.6	8.0	7.5	7.7	7.4
TABE Reading Level Less than 8.5[a] (Percentage)	59	53	60	8	61
Initial TABE Math Grade	7.1	7.2	7.0	7.1	7.0
TABE Math Level Less than 8.5 (Percentage)	74	70	74	73	75

SOURCE: SPAMIS data for 1996 terminees from Job Corps.

[a] Students with initial TABE scores below 8.5 are assigned to graded reading and math. Students who score 8.5 or above are assigned to GED preparation.

CCCs). Moreover, the table indicates that centers with significant proportions of nonresidents tend to serve more students having a GED or high school diploma upon entry compared to centers that are primarily residential.[1]

Table V.1 also provides information on the number of years of schooling completed and initial reading and math grade levels based on scores from the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE).[2] On average, Job Corps students have completed the 10th grade at entry, read at a 7.6 grade level, and perform at a 7.1 grade level in math.[3] Although the number of years of schooling completed does not seem to vary by center type or region, students' grade levels vary on both these dimensions. For example, the initial TABE reading and math scores of CCC students seem to be higher compared to students served by contract centers. Thus, these results indicate that compared to contract centers, CCCs tend to serve more students without a GED or high school diploma but with higher measured reading and math abilities.[4]

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[1] Although not reported in the table, there are substantial differences in students' academic abilities by region of the country. Specifically, students in Region 2 have much lower educational attainment, with less than 15 percent of terminees having a GED or high school diploma at entry, compared to Regions 1 and 10, where nearly twice as many students (28 percent) have a GED or high school diploma when they enter Job Corps.

[2] These are norm-referenced tests designed to measure achievement in basic skills commonly found in adult basic education curricula and taught in instructional programs. At the time the National Job Corps Study began, Job Corps was using Forms 5 and 6 of the TABE. Beginning in July 1996, Job Corps began using the new edition of the TABE, Forms 7 and 8, which expanded the assessment range to include new objectives that are measured in the GED tests and taught at the high school level and beyond.

[3] Because grade-level equivalents are not equal interval scales, it is not strictly appropriate to create an arithmetic average of students' grade levels. As a result, Job Corps has more recently adopted the use of scale scores to measure students' academic abilities. However, we report grade-level equivalent data here for ease of interpretation and because scale scores were not consistently available for this period.

[4] Although not reported, we also find that Region 2 students have the lowest reading level (6.9 grade-level equivalent on average), compared to a high of 8.9 in Region 10 and 8.5 in Region 7/8.

(continued...)

The next section discusses in more detail the academic programs that Job Corps offers for this population.

C. ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The Job Corps academic education program offers open-entry, open-exit courses in reading, mathematics, writing/thinking skills, GED, and other core areas. Teachers implement the program with the help of the Job Corps Computer Managed Instructional (CMI) system, which provides them with current student data that can be used for placing students at an appropriate level and for follow-up assessment. At the time of the site visits, the academic program at 10 of the 23 centers was accredited by an external entity, either by the regional accrediting association or by the state education agency.

1. Reading Competencies Program

Job Corps provides a Basic Reading and a Graded Reading competencies program. According to the policies effective at the time of our site visits in 1996, students are placed into the Basic Reading program if the score on their initial TABE reading test is a grade-level equivalent of 3.2 or lower.[5] Students with TABE reading grade equivalent scores of 3.3 to 8.4 are placed in the Graded Reading program. Students scoring 8.5 or greater on their initial TABE reading test are typically exempted from placement into the reading program, and those without a high school diploma or

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[4](...continued)
In the two regions with the highest average reading levels, from 53 to 60 percent of students read above the 8.5 grade level, compared to less than 30 percent of the students in Region 2.

[5] Although in July 1996 a new form of the TABE (7/8) was introduced that is somewhat more difficult than version 5/6, the regulations in the Job Corps *Policy and Requirements Handbook* continued to use the same TABE cutoff levels for assigning students to reading, math, and GED classes.

GED are assigned to the GED program. Students with a high school diploma or GED who score below 8.5 at entry are placed in the appropriate reading competencies program for remediation. Based on TABE data for students who terminated from Job Corps in 1996, approximately 10 percent scored below 3.2 at entry, 48 percent scored between 3.3 and 8.4, and 41 percent tested at grade-level 8.5 or higher.

Students initially placed in Basic Reading advance to Graded Reading when they complete the required instructional materials, demonstrate competency on completion tests specified for their level, and attain a grade equivalent of 3.3 or higher on the TABE. Students exit the Graded Reading program when they complete the required readings/skills assignments and attain passing scores on the reading and skill tests or score 8.5 or higher on a follow-up TABE. Even students who enter Job Corps with a GED or high school diploma must score 8.5 or higher on their TABE to be exempt from the reading program.

The CMI system assists teachers and students in this process by providing initial placement, lesson assignment, lesson and test scoring, and individual student tracking. The Job Corps curriculum and the CMI system dictate the contents of the reading program almost entirely. Discussions with academic instructors during the site visits reveal that most reading instructors rely solely upon Job Corps material and few use supplemental materials. Academic instructors at most centers indicated that they have some degree of flexibility with their instructional approach but less with the content, which is dictated by the CMI system. Although all centers we visited provide the reading program according to its two-tier design of Basic Reading and Graded Reading, one center divides the graded reading class into two further groupings: 3.3 to 6.3 reading level and 6.4 to 8.4 reading level.

Several centers provide individualized tutorial assistance to help students with their reading program. At least two of the centers visited use the New Century Reading and Math Program, a computer tutorial program. Other centers have arranged to receive tutorial assistance for their center from local organizations (such as an adult literacy center), individuals, or community colleges. In addition, as described in more detail below, a special Job Corps tutorial program--Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP)--is offered at more than half the centers visited to assist students who are having difficulty progressing in their reading (or math) program.

Based on our review of the program at 23 centers, CMI is a key part of the instruction and assessment components of the Job Corps reading program. CMI provides both computer-assisted instruction for the academic content and a record-keeping and tracking mechanism on student progress through the required levels. CMI contains assignments for students and exercises based on their level of success on preceding assignments; it also provides them with feedback on the results of their work. CMI is generally well regarded by reading instructors, and some of the advantages they cited include:

- Accurate assessment of student progress
- Immediate feedback to students about their progress
- Substantial reduction in paperwork for instructors
- Greater responsibility for students for their learning process as they track their progress

Despite the generally favorable overall evaluation of the CMI system, reading instructors cited certain problematic aspects of the system, including:

- CMI is viewed as inflexible and as difficult for instructors, since they are unable to eliminate or skip certain parts of the curriculum or correct errors they find in the exercises.

- CMI reading assignments do not cover some of the content areas that students encounter in TABE tests.
- TABE results suggest that CMI's reading program lacks the diagnostic component that the math CMI contains.
- Some students have discovered ways to enter fraudulent scores in CMI records to indicate they have completed certain assignments that have not actually been completed. Although not a pervasive problem, this security breach was cited by staff at several centers.
- Staff have difficulty introducing supplemental materials, as students are reluctant to study topics that are not specified in CMI, viewing them as not required and considering additional learning to be a waste of time if the assignment is not on their computer screen. This was noted by several instructors during the center visits.

Discussions with National Office staff reveal that several modifications have been made to the CMI system since our site visits in 1996 to increase the flexibility and functionality of the system. For example, a diagnostic component was incorporated into the CMI reading program in 1997.

2. Math Competencies Program

As in the reading program, initial placement into the math program is based on TABE results. Students who lack a high school diploma or GED and who test at grade 8.5 or higher are assigned to the GED program. All students who score lower than grade 8.5 on the TABE math test must participate in the math program until they reach that level. Based on data for students who terminated from Job Corps during 1996, only slightly over one-quarter (26.4 percent) scored 8.5 or above on their initial TABE math test.

The math program consists of four levels of instruction on the following topics: whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and percents/proportions. Completion of all assignments and tests is recorded and tracked by CMI as students advance through the units performing exercises provided by the CMI system, sometimes supplemented by instructor-generated lessons and problems. CMI for the math program contains a diagnostic component. Completion of required assignments, passing scores on unit tests, and an 8.5 or better TABE grade equivalent are exit requirements.

Many of the observations regarding the use, benefits, and disadvantages of the CMI reading program also apply to the math program. In addition, instructors specifically noted several other disadvantages of the math CMI:

- Math CMI lends itself more to test-taking and is less useful in providing instructional exercises and feedback.
- Math CMI contains too many assignments and exercises that have to be completed for a student to demonstrate mastery and move to the next level; instructors need to reduce the assignments for students to avoid impeding student progress.
- Instructors need a way to modify the word problems in the test; otherwise students learn the test questions and score higher on the tests than their true abilities would otherwise indicate.
- Teacher-generated skills sheets have to be used to cover some items that are on the TABE test but not covered in the CMI assignments for the appropriate TABE test level. For example, teachers reported that the point at which fractions and decimals are covered in the CMI does not correspond with the expected level of knowledge reflected on the TABE test, and they must supplement the curriculum in these areas.

3. Writing/Thinking Skills Competencies Program

Students are placed into the writing/thinking skills program based upon a pre-assessment test and a writing sample (essay) given upon entry. Results of these tests are analyzed by the CMI system, and students are assigned to the appropriate units in each of four skill area components: (1) usage/mechanics, (2) process, (3) application, and (4) thinking skills. A student is considered to have completed the program upon attainment of a specified minimum score on post-tests or completion of all assigned additional required and supplementary materials. A completer may be promoted to the GED program in the subtest area of writing skills or to the Graded Reading classes, if additional work is needed in those areas. As with the reading and math assessments, students have to achieve PRH-specified minimum threshold scores to be exempted from this component of the educational program, even if they have already received a GED or high school diploma.

During the site visits, we obtained considerable input from teachers concerning the writing/thinking skills curriculum. Specifically, in five of the centers visited, staff indicated that this curriculum needed to be overhauled. Their comments indicated that it often "does not engage the students" and that it "is over the head" of many who meet the entry requirements. This course was cited at one center as having "an exceptionally high student failure rate." More computer-assisted instruction was suggested as a way to make the course more beneficial, since it allows better interactive diagnostics of student weaknesses and tailored assignments and feedback.

4. GED Competencies Program

All centers offer a GED Competencies Program to prepare students without a GED or high school diploma for the five subject area subtests of the GED: writing skills, social studies, science, interpreting literature and the arts, and mathematics. Students are required to complete the graded reading, math, and writing/thinking skills competencies programs--or test out of them based on their initial TABE scores--before being enrolled in the GED program. Some centers offer a pre-GED class for students who complete reading and math but who are still unable to score high enough on the TABE test to indicate readiness for the GED program.

As described in Chapter IX, the percentage of students earning GEDs is an important performance measure for Job Corps centers. Most centers focus great attention on preparing students to enroll in the GED program and to take the GED test. Several centers use additional materials, beyond standard Job Corps curriculum, as part of their curriculum. Software programs (GED 2000), Compuserve on-line GED materials, tutorials using college students from area schools or local adult education centers, and creative writing instructors were mentioned by some of the centers visited as important aspects of the GED program. Although most centers structure classes so that a single instructor teaches all GED subjects, at least one center found the use of different instructors for different components (such as reading, math, and social studies) to be especially effective. One academic manager indicated that the Job Corps GED curriculum is superior--more comprehensive and in-depth--than that of most outside GED programs.

In addition to helping students obtain their GEDs, approximately one-third of the centers offer students the opportunity to obtain high school diplomas. Although several Job Corps centers are designated as alternative high schools, high school diplomas are usually offered in conjunction with the local public school system, either through on-center courses or classes at the local high school. Although education program staff try to encourage students to obtain their diploma by describing the additional value of a high school diploma over a GED, they reported that it is often difficult to persuade students to commit the additional time and effort.

5. Other Core Academic Program Offerings

All Job Corps centers also offer other required components of the Job Corps academic program: WOW, health education/alcohol and other drugs of abuse, parenting education, cultural awareness and IGR, and driver education. Although ESL is not required, we cover it in this section because it is part of the academic program at a number of centers. Key elements of these components are discussed below.

World of Work (WOW). Although WOW is required of all students, PRH regulations specify that students are not to be assigned to this course until their TABE reading score is adequate for them to be assigned to Graded Reading. The WOW course has two major components: (1) an introductory phase (consisting of general skills for getting and keeping a job), and (2) the exit readiness phase (preparing students to conduct their job search). The introductory phase is intended to be taught at or near a student's entry into Job Corps, and the exit readiness phase is intended as a refresher in employment-seeking skills before a student leaves the center to work. To complete the WOW program, students must take pre- and post-tests, complete application tasks for each unit of instruction within the introductory phase, and demonstrate mastery within each unit. The CMI system is used in the introductory phase of WOW for placement, assignments, test scoring, and individual student tracking.

The exit readiness phase consists of three units: (1) resume, cover letter, and application preparation; (2) job sources and interviews; and (3) transition issues. Some centers consider this a separate course that they call "Exit World of Work." A post-test is used only to measure competency in the "transition issues" unit of the course. The other exit readiness phase units are designed so that students complete assignments and prepare a product, a portfolio of materials to take with them to use in their personal job search.

Most centers teach WOW as a self-paced course. However, at least one of the centers visited taught the introductory phase as a "lock-step" course. Staff at several centers suggested ways that WOW could be improved and made more useful to students. Among their concerns was that the assessment tests had not been modified to reflect recent changes in the course materials. Staff at several Job Corps centers we visited also indicated that WOW needs to be more practical and up to date and should include topics such as teamwork and sexual harassment, as well as simulated videotaped job interviews. The academic manager at one center also recommended that the introductory WOW occur later in the student's tenure, when the course materials are more relevant to students.

Health Education/AODA Program. The health education program (HEP) contains a basic component and a 10-hour AODA (alcohol and other drugs of abuse) unit, which many centers treat as a separate course. The PRH indicates that the AODA unit should be taught using a lock-step group presentation instructional approach. An AODA counselor or specialist often teaches that portion of the course. From our site visits, we found that many centers taught AODA early in the student's academic schedule, usually in a lock-step approach. Topics covered in the AODA classes reportedly include Job Corps' zero-tolerance (ZT) policy, anger control, building self-esteem, and other topics to teach students about decision-making. Only one center indicated that AODA was taught with a self-paced, open-entry, open-exit approach, with student activity guides (SAGs) as completion guides. Several center staff indicated that the AODA curriculum needed updating.

The remaining part of HEP is usually taught by a different instructor, often a nurse or one of the instructors from a health-related training program. This portion of the HEP curriculum is typically presented with a self-paced, open-entry, open-exit approach. Topics covered in addition to AODA include emotional and social well-being, human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS, nutrition, fitness, dental hygiene, consumer health, and safety. First aid and CPR training are also recommended for students. Staff from two of the centers visited indicated that HEP needed to be "livened up" to make it more interesting and effective.

Parenting. The parenting course is required for all students--males, females, parents, and nonparents. Students must demonstrate mastery of 28 essential skills to verify their competency before being designated as having successfully completed the course. The Job Corps PRH recommends that students either be simultaneously enrolled or have completed the health education units on STDs and human sexuality before enrolling in the parenting education component.

Many of the centers we visited offer parenting as a lock-step course. One staff member suggested that it would be useful to combine parenting into a course that could also include health and perhaps cultural awareness. Other staff suggested making parenting self-paced to provide more flexibility in scheduling, so that students are not getting near their termination date and then trying to schedule entry into a class that they were unable to schedule previously.

Cultural Awareness. The cultural awareness class is one portion of the structured IGR program (described in Chapter VI) that each center must offer. The course component consists of eight instructional units that are scheduled into each student's academic program. Topics include living among different cultural groups, acceptance of differences, and discussions about different languages, music, food, and art. Videos and exercises are often part of the course. Course completion is based on the satisfactory demonstration of the student's achievement of the objectives as measured in a written or oral assessment by the instructor.

During our site visits, we observed that these courses are taught by a variety of different types of staff, depending on who expressed an interest, had time available, and was willing to take the assignment. Many centers teach the course in a lock-step manner. One center combines cultural awareness and parenting during the student's third week on center, before the student is assigned to the rest of the vocational or academic program.

Driver Education. The PRH indicates that driver education should be offered to all eligible students, with priority given to students in vocations where the possession of a driver's license is essential. Driver education is designed to meet the requirements for classroom and on-the-road training of the state in which the center is located. Centers pay the cost of licenses for eligible students.

The extent to which centers provide an active driver education program varies considerably. For example, several centers indicated that they currently had no students enrolled in driver education. This was generally due to the lack of an instructor or an available vehicle. One center indicated that it provided driver education through a contract with the American Automobile Association in its area.

English as a Second Language (ESL). The ESL Competencies Program is designed to be taught at all centers designated as ESL centers. Students who are unable to read the TABE locator because English is not their primary language are exempted from taking the TABE reading subtests and are assigned a TABE total reading score of 1.0 (the ESL designation). ESL students and those who have limited English proficiency (LEP) are scheduled to take the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) test. All students who fail to attain a designated reading or listening scale score on the CASAS test must enroll in the ESL program. (Enrollment in ESL is optional for LEP students.) ESL instructors determine when students complete the ESL program, based on the students' mastery of assignments and tests at their designated level. Close to half the sites we visited included ESL instruction as part of their academic program, and one center had an ESL math program.

6. Special Academic Programs

In 15 of the 23 centers visited, various special programs and pilot projects were implemented as part of the academic education program to help improve student performance. The most common was MAP, an intensive instructional approach aimed at students who are not performing at the expected pace in reading or math. More than half the centers visited offer the MAP program to students who need individualized remedial assistance, especially in reading. In most centers in which MAP is available, students are assigned and scheduled to the program based on either their initial TABE scores or their progress in initially assigned classes; in one center, students are given the option of signing up for a MAP class.

Some of the centers visited offer other remedial tutorial programs, including Success Maker (an interactive computer-assisted reading and math supplemental program), an SOS (Strategies for the Older Student) reading laboratory, off-site Adult Basic Education classes, and other special tutorial classes or assistance. According to the center mail survey, 90 percent of centers report that they offer tutoring programs for academic classes (94 percent of contract centers and 80 percent of CCCs).

In addition to providing remedial and tutorial assistance programs, some centers offer "enrichment" courses beyond the basic Job Corps curriculum. Courses such as journalism, graphing, computer lab instruction, physical education, advanced reading, advanced math, and even advanced driver education are available at selected centers to students who meet the eligibility criteria, typically completion of the basic offerings or attainment of a GED. In addition, 43 percent of all centers reported in the mail survey that they offer a pre-college/technical institute course for students who want to enroll in postsecondary classes. This course provides students with additional support on study habits, reading and math skills enhancement, and other preparation to help their transition into advanced education and training. Also, at least five of the centers visited offer college and postsecondary opportunities; in three cases, some college courses are taught on center.

We also obtained information on the extent to which centers offer optional academic programs. According to the mail survey, 61 percent of centers offer off-center college courses; 14 percent offer college courses on center; 42 percent offer ESL classes; and 43 percent offer pre-college and technical skills training. The optional offerings available at CCCs are considerably different from those of contract centers. For example, 76 percent of contract centers and only 20 percent of CCCs offer off-center college technical institute classes. Similarly, 50 percent of contract centers offer ESL classes, compared to only 20 percent of CCCs.

D. ASSESSMENT, ASSIGNMENT, AND SCHEDULING

Student assignments to classes and the mix of their academic and vocational course load are based primarily on the results of initial and follow-up assessments. Assignment to the appropriate level of reading, math, or GED classes is based solely on results on the student's initial TABE. All centers administer the TABE to students, along with the Writing/Thinking Skills Pre-Assessment Tests, as part of their first week's activities. TABE testing typically includes a TABE locator test, which determines which test level is appropriate. Proper levels of the reading and math TABE subtests are then administered. The results of the TABE and the Writing/Thinking Skills Pre-Assessment Test are usually obtained a week to 10 days after a student's arrival on center. According to center staff, these assessment activities take about five to six hours on average.

These required tests are the only ones used at most centers, though some also use the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) for ESL students. Some administer a practice version of the GED test to students who perform sufficiently well on the TABE assessments.[6]

The scheduling of a student's initial academic and vocational coursework may be conducted by a scheduling clerk, the academic manager or lead instructor, or a committee that consists of academic, vocational, and other staff. At one center we visited, students participated in a scheduling meeting with the academic manager, vocational manager, OEP instructor, and counselor to discuss their vocational choice and schedule of classes. Once the vocational choice is made, the academic schedule is structured to ensure that all TABE-indicated classes are provided. In addition to the reading and math academic classes, the student must be scheduled for other required core courses.

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[6] In addition, some provisions are made on a limited basis at selected centers for students who may have special needs--learning disabled, special education, or physically unable to take the TABE. However, most centers indicate that they have not had to make provisions for students with special needs because they do not enroll them--students with substantial disabilities are usually assigned to the few centers especially equipped to accommodate them.

At most centers, students begin their academic program during either their third or their fourth week on center, after completing orientation, academic assessment, and OEP. Because some trades may have waiting lists, the vocational schedule is established first, and the academic schedule is then fit around the nonvocational periods. Several noteworthy deviations from this typical process were observed:

- At several centers, students begin their academic program during their second week on center, immediately after completing their TABE testing. In those instances, the students are going through their vocational assessment (Occupational Exploration Program) while in the early days of their academic program.
- In other centers, students are assigned to take required courses such as cultural awareness or parenting during their third week on center, before beginning their core academic program. In those cases, students might not begin reading and math classes until their fifth week on center, especially if they begin a full week of vocational classes during their fourth week.
- At one center we visited, students must complete a week of center support (usually manual labor to help maintain the center) before they begin their academic or vocational program. Students in this center do not begin their academic program until their fourth or fifth week. Staff at this center believe that this activity helps students recognize that they have a shared responsibility to contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of the facilities.

Most students begin their Job Corps program with a balanced schedule of one-half academic coursework and one-half vocational coursework. Even students who have completed their basic reading and math requirements or have a GED or high school diploma are initially assigned to the other courses (health education, WOW, cultural awareness) to complete their academic requirements. Once those requirements are fulfilled, students are able to move quickly toward a full-time vocational schedule. Conversely, students with substantial academic needs may be assigned to an

80 percent academic (and 20 percent vocational) schedule during their early period on center, so that they make necessary progress toward the learning goals. At the extreme, ESL students, before being assigned to a trade, may take a 100 percent academic schedule until their skills in English are sufficient to establish an initial TABE level and they demonstrate understanding of English instructions.

Several academic staff reported that they prefer a split-day schedule, especially for students with low academic skills, because their students lose too much focus when they are away from academics for a whole week. Conversely, the intensity of a full day of academics can also be overwhelming for low-skilled students. The split day, which gives a dose of academic activities to students every day, is seen as best for many of the Job Corps students, although it makes vocational instruction, especially on work sites, more difficult.

E. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Resources available to support the academic programs of Job Corps include the academic education classrooms and may include libraries, learning labs, and tutors or aides. Almost every center visited had a library, and most centers also have learning labs, academic counseling, and tutors/aides available as resources for students.

Job Corps center staff are generally pleased with the facilities and materials available for the academic portion of the program. Staff rated academic facilities as average or above average on most factors, including space, light, temperature, noise control, accessibility and safety, and cleanliness and maintenance. Where complaints were voiced, they typically focused on the cramped classroom space available for the academic program at some centers.

The availability and condition of materials for the academic program were typically rated as above average by staff during our site visits. Learning materials, including books, equipment, and other supplies, were accessible, in good physical condition, and in sufficient quantity for all students. Very few complaints were voiced about the materials, except that some were considered inappropriate for the students' age and cultural background. Several instructors cited a need for greater cultural relevance of materials used in some classwork. Overall, however, center facilities and resources do not appear to limit the academic program.

F. COORDINATION WITH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A variety of federal, state, and local education initiatives are aimed at increasing the communication and collaboration between academic and vocational education instruction and staff. Approaches such as school-to-work and Tech-Prep have resulted in greater recognition of the importance of reinforcing the link between academic content and its application in the workplace. Similar efforts have been made in Job Corps as well, including a growing school-to-work emphasis that was evident at a few centers and that has expanded considerably in many more. Next, we briefly summarize examples of vocational and academic educational collaboration:

- Eleven of the 23 academic managers we interviewed during the center visits reported that their vocational and academic areas coordinated programs "to a great extent," while 9 indicated that academic and vocational staff coordinated "to some extent." Coordination typically included meeting to discuss scheduling, individual student progress, and academic deficiencies to be addressed in the vocational trades.

- Over 80 percent of the academic respondents indicated that vocational and academic faculty met regularly to discuss individual student progress. This is most likely to occur during group P/PEP sessions in which academic and vocational staff met, along with other staff, to discuss student progress.

- Vocational and academic staff coordination also occurred during the scheduling of course offerings. Academic and vocational staff met to discuss the proposed schedule for individual students. In a few centers, academic assessment results entered into the vocational decision for selected trades.

- Academic and vocational staff were less likely to coordinate curriculum or to discuss modifications in the academic or vocational program.

- At the time of the site visits, two centers had aggressively implemented an applied academics component to facilitate school-to-work transitions. At one of these, the vocational and academic instructors met weekly to develop an "applied academics" lesson that would be taught each week in each of the trade classes. At the other, applied academics were stressed through teachers switching between academic and vocational classes.

Despite frequent meetings between academic and vocational staff to discuss individual student progress and scheduling, several barriers to further collaboration were reported. In some cases, historical patterns of separation between academic and vocational instruction continued, and reluctance to change was substantial. In many cases, academic and vocational education remain under two separate managers who have parallel but separate reporting chains to the center director. As a result, these two components continue to be seen as distinct entities. Other observations include:

- Academic staff in several centers expressed frustration with what they believed to be trade instructors' lack of commitment to improving the academic capabilities of students. One respondent indicated that a trade instructor said, "I don't care if they ever get a GED, as long as they learn the trade."
- Because of the lack of time (a result of limited planning periods and different end-of-day times for academic and vocational staff), some managers believed that, without some systemic changes, the potential for further coordination between academic and vocational areas was limited.
- "Territorial staff," who are focused on either their academic or their vocational area, were also cited as a barrier to further collaboration.

Nevertheless, the amount and quality of collaboration between academic and vocational education components at Job Corps centers appear to be substantially more than is often found in many traditional school settings.

VI. CENTER OPERATIONS: RESIDENTIAL LIVING AND HEALTH SERVICES

Except for the time spent-in academic education and vocational training, center life is governed by the residential living component of Job Corps. Residential living encompasses a wide range of program elements, including new student orientation, residential support services, counseling, social skills development, evaluation of student progress, intergroup relations, recreation, student government and leadership, and behavior management. A closely related component of center life is the provision of health services.

All centers undertake pre-orientation and orientation activities to help new students adjust to center life. Pre-orientation activities are geared toward ensuring that the new student has as much information as possible about what to expect. Orientation services are geared toward making the student feel welcome, fully informing the student about program expectations and services, and integrating the new student into the center community.

Residential living support services are an integral element of the Job Corps model. They are essential to ensuring a secure, attractive physical and social environment at a center that promotes student achievement. Residential advisors (RAs) are central to the residential living support services. They help students adjust to center life, support them in all aspects of their Job Corps experiences, and take responsibility for ensuring their accountability.

Counseling services play a vital role in the operation of a Job Corps center. Every center must maintain a structured counseling program that includes educational guidance; vocational, personal, sexuality, drug/alcohol, and placement counseling; family planning; social skills development; and evaluation of students' progress. Counseling services staff maintain students' personal and social development records and often serve as a coordinating point for both students and other staff.

To promote positive, socially acceptable behaviors among students, each center must conduct a structured social skills training (SST) program, using a prescribed curriculum. This curriculum includes 50 social skills and a Social Training Achievement Record (STAR) to record students' progress and performance, in addition to manuals and handbooks for both staff and students. All students must participate in and successfully complete all SST program units. After completing the SST program, students must participate in ongoing center activities to reinforce and practice their skills.

One of the most important elements of the residential living component is the evaluation of student progress. Each center must implement a "maximum benefits system" through the establishment of Progress/Performance Evaluation Panels (P/PEPs), to ensure that each student reaches maximum potential in the program. This system must take into account each student's specific educational, vocational, and social needs. The P/PEP, which must consist of the student, his or her counselor, an education instructor, a vocational instructor, and an RA or SST facilitator, is usually chaired by the counselor. Evaluations are scheduled to take place between 30 and 45 days after enrollment and every 60 enrollment days thereafter. The P/PEP assesses a student's progress in academic education, vocational training, residential living, and the SST program and sets goals to be met by the next P/PEP meeting. In addition, the P/PEP makes recommendations to the center director on changes in the student's program, readiness for entry into the exit program, and the award of any performance bonuses.

Job Corps has developed a structured intergroup relations (IGR) program to reduce prejudice, prevent discriminatory behavior by staff and students, and increase understanding among racial/ethnic groups and between men and women. Each center must adopt the IGR program guide, which specifies the components of a three-phase IGR program. Phase I is taught during the orientation process. Phase II is incorporated into the cultural-awareness element of the academic educational program and is taught during the class day. Phase III is an ongoing program, planned and carried out by an IGR committee of staff and students, that enables students to apply the concepts learned in earlier phases. It consists primarily of a schedule of events and activities, with at least one event or activity required in every calendar month.

The recreation/avocation program provided at centers is believed to have a strong impact on center life and student achievement. Centers must provide recreational opportunities after class hours and on weekends and holidays. These include cultural events, physical education, group and individual sports, arts and crafts, community activities, reading resource facilities and materials, and movies or other special events. The recreation/avocation staff, with student input, must plan and prepare both a seasonal calendar of activities and a weekly calendar of events based on periodic assessments of student needs and preferences.

Because student input into the program is so important, centers must provide a structured student leadership training program and must establish an elected student government. The leadership training program must have a defined course of study, covering the objectives of Job Corps, principles of leadership and human relations, and continuing in-service training for elected leaders. The student government must have significant advisory responsibilities in planning and implementing the residential living component, including establishment and operation of a Student Welfare Association that oversees the operation and accounting of on-center concessions and other revenue sources.

All centers must develop a set of reasonable rules and regulations to govern student conduct. The center director is responsible for their development, with significant advisory input from the elected student government. In addition to rules for on- and off-center behavior, these rules and regulations must include a disciplinary system, a center review board, an appeals procedure, and sanctions.

Finally, all centers must provide a health program (medical, dental, and mental health) for all students from admission until termination from the Job Corps program. In addition to routine health services, the health program must include a daily sick call or open appointment system with necessary specialist referrals, written arrangements for off-center inpatient care, and ready access to emergency services on a 24-hour basis.

Each of these program elements is described in more detail below.

A. ORIENTATION OF NEW STUDENTS

The decision to enroll in Job Corps is a major one for young people who are found eligible for the program. Being away from home and neighborhood, living in close quarters with strangers (many of whom come from different places and have diverse ethnic or religious backgrounds), conforming to the structure and regimentation of center life--all these factors demand growth and adjustment of the new Job Corps student. Recognizing how difficult and stressful the transition to center life can be for new students, the Job Corps program has created program elements designed specifically to help the new student make the necessary adjustments.

One of these program elements is guided tours of the center. Nearly all centers offer regular tours (Table VI.1), which prospective students and their parents are encouraged to take. Over half (56 percent) offer tours at least once a week, and another 28 percent offer them once or twice a month. Less than 1 percent (one center) reported not offering any tours. Tours are provided more frequently in significantly nonresidential centers and less frequently at Civilian Conservation Centers (CCCs), which would be expected from the size and locations of the two kinds of centers. Center

TABLE VI.1

ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES
(Percentage of Centers)

	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Frequency of Tours				
At least once a week	56	30	57	81
Once or twice a week	28	43	26	15
Once every few months	10	17	17	0
Response to Students Uncertain About Enrolling Staff usually...				
Encourage student	31	36		
Discourage student	19	18		
Neither encourage nor discourage student	50	46		

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

tours are also more common at centers that have some involvement in outreach and admissions (OA) activities.

Other critical elements designed to help students become acquainted with Job Corps and adjust to center life are pre-orientation and orientation programs. Pre-orientation activities are directed at students before they arrive on center. Orientation activities are geared toward students in their first few days or weeks on center.

1. Pre-Orientation

Pre-orientation occurs after a student has been assigned to a center but before the student arrives. It is the first direct contact that center staff have with the prospective student. Until this point, most students have received information about the center from OA staff or through word of mouth. Pre-orientation offers the center an opportunity to give the student additional information, find out more about the student, and set the tone for future interactions. Pre-orientation programs must be approved by and are monitored by the regional offices.

The primary activities of pre-orientation programs are pre-arrival informational letters and phone calls. Mail survey data show that most centers (93 percent) contact prospective students by both mail and telephone. Only a few rely solely on letters (3 percent) or phone calls (5 percent). Most centers also encourage prospective students to visit the center for a tour, but tours are not practical for many students who live far away.

Pre-arrival letters provide additional information about the center and its location, the vocational and educational options available to the students, and the rules and regulations that guide center life. Letters also provide information about transportation and orientation and what to bring and not to bring to the center. The tone of these form letters varies from positive and encouraging to a more heavy-handed emphasis on rules and expectations. Most exhibit a blend of the two approaches.

Pre-arrival telephone calls to prospective students are typically initiated by counseling or orientation staff. Although the topics covered during these calls are usually the same as those addressed in the letter, the telephone contact provides an opportunity for two-way exchange. Students can ask questions about the center, and staff can learn about students' interests or medical, educational, or legal histories.

Centers generally feel that pre-orientation contact with students, especially by telephone, is an important part of the orientation program. The information sharing that occurs at this time helps students arrive at the center with a realistic understanding of the program and its expectations and helps the centers anticipate any special needs or problems that will have to be addressed. The pre-arrival contacts are used by centers to:

- Review center rules and expectations
- Inform the prospective student of the zero-tolerance policy and other guidelines
- Supplement (or correct as necessary) information provided by outreach staff
- Discuss the student's vocational trade interests and applicable waiting list
- Assess the prospective student's commitment to Job Corps

Assessing Student Commitment. As discussed in Chapter III, OA counselors follow several practices to assess the capability, aspirations, motivations, and commitment of applicants. To varying degrees, centers use the pre-arrival phone contacts to assess applicants' commitment and suitability for Job Corps. Respondents to the center survey were asked to indicate their staff's typical response to a prospective student who expresses uncertainty about whether to enroll (Table VI.1). At half the centers, staff usually try to answer all the youth's questions during the pre-arrival phone call and neither encourage the youth to enter nor discourage the youth from entering the center. At just less than one-third of the centers (31 percent), staff usually encourage youths to enroll, while staff at the remaining centers (19 percent) usually tell youths not to come until they are certain of their decision. These differences in center practices likely reflect differences in their philosophy of student recruitment, with those that discourage uncertain youth essentially screening to enroll only students who are committed and who will persevere in the program.

2. Orientation

Orientation programs are designed to make new students feel welcome, introduce them to the Job Corps program and center life, and assess their capabilities and interests for appropriate placement in academic and vocational programs. The importance that centers place on this period of adjustment is evident from the fact that students are generally asked to wait and enroll at the next orientation if more than one day is going to be missed. If students are late and miss a small portion of the orientation session, centers help them catch up.

Most centers admit new students every week. Eighty percent of all centers conduct new student intake activities on a weekly basis, and nearly all others (except one) conduct new student intake at least every other week. The number of students arriving during each intake period depends on both the size of the center and the weekly termination rate. Centers plan arrivals based on the number of students they expect to be leaving each week through the normal exit phase of the program. This ranges from as few as 6 to as many as 70 or more in some large centers. Generally, centers are replacing 3 to 4 percent of their students at each new intake. For large centers, the job of accommodating a high volume of new students can be a challenge.

Meeting New Students. Centers vary greatly in their approaches to welcoming students when they first arrive. At a number of centers, the orientation staff is on hand to greet students, but several use security staff instead of or in addition to orientation personnel. These generally are the centers where students are required to pass through security to gain access. A few centers mentioned using current students to greet incoming students. Centers typically send their own transportation staff or dorm staff to meet students at the bus station or the airport.

Intake Interviews. One of the first activities that students participate in upon arrival at a Job Corps center is an intake interview, usually a one-on-one session with a counselor. Counselors use the intake process as an opportunity to assess whether the students are at risk of leaving the program and to learn their fears, answer their questions, and help orient them. One center we visited reported using a separate orientation counselor for this interview, but the norm is to assign each counselor a group of new students in addition to the ongoing caseload. Counseling assignments are usually based on dorm residence but may be based on vocation; some centers assign students to dorms by vocation, so sometimes these two approaches are equivalent.

The one-on-one intake interviews range in duration across centers, from a few minutes to an hour or more. At one extreme is a center where counselors routinely spend two hours with each student; at the other are those that report that counselors spend only 15 minutes per student. Almost half the centers (41 percent) fall somewhere in the middle, devoting 30 to 45 minutes to the intake interview.

Orientation Schedule. Once students arrive and complete their intake interview, a formal orientation program begins. Orientation typically lasts two weeks at most centers, although shorter orientation periods are sometimes encountered in rural CCCs. In a typical two-week session, the first week is occupied with activities designed to help the student become familiar with and adjust to life on center, and the second week is focused on the occupational exploration program (OEP). As described in Chapter IV, the OEP introduces students to the vocational choices available on center.

A typical first week of orientation is highly structured. Students move from activity to required activity from breakfast through dinner. Structured activities, such as community tours, recreational events, and dorm meetings, are also offered during free time on evenings and weekends. Staff commented that a busy schedule helps to decrease levels of homesickness, a common problem among new students.

Orientation Content. During the first day of orientation, a heavy emphasis is placed on rules, discipline structures, and zero tolerance. Only a few centers indicated that they emphasize motivational messages related to goal setting, opportunities, and achievement at the outset. Most structured orientation time during the rest of the first week is devoted to staff presentations, tours of the facility, testing, and other intake activities, such as filling out forms. Almost half the centers also emphasize special recreational or social activities (special meals, parties, recreational outings) as an important component of orientation, because these activities help students adjust to their new environment. During our site visits, some staff especially stressed the importance of having fun activities for students during this period. Only one staff member mentioned counseling activities as an important part of the adjustment process. In contrast, many counselors described themselves as playing an active role in the orientation process, leading activities specifically designed to foster adjustment.

Orientation Staffing. In accordance with national guidelines, centers involve a range of staff in the orientation process, with representatives from the various components (academic, vocational, recreation) introducing that component to new students. The orientation coordinator's role varies across sites. At many sites, the coordinator is concerned primarily with planning, scheduling, and carrying out activities, including transporting students. At other sites, the coordinator also monitors the adjustment of individual students.

Student Roles. Students play a major role in orientation at most centers. Student "big brothers" or "big sisters" are generally assigned to incoming students to act as guides and mentors during their first week or two at the center. At many centers, peer involvement appears confined to informal pairing of new students with older students. However, a few centers mentioned specific, structured involvement of older students who greet incoming students, give tours, and participate in discussion groups. Several centers especially emphasized the use of students as an important element of orientation to help students feel more relaxed and comfortable and to provide positive, successful role models.

Successful Elements. From our discussions with center staff, it appears that the elements of the orientation program that are especially helpful for new students include:

- Pre-orientation program, especially the telephone contact, to help students know what to expect and to help the center anticipate special needs or problems
- Use of student peers to help students feel relaxed and to provide positive role models
- Special, fun activities to engage students and help them feel more comfortable with each other and with staff
- High degree of structure that keeps students busy and engaged

Focus groups with new students highlighted the difficulty that students have adapting to life in Job Corps in the first few days and weeks. Adjusting to the high degree of structure and control the center exerts and to the lack of privacy can be difficult for new students. Difficulties adjusting are especially pronounced among younger students (ages 16 and 17). The success of the orientation program is seen as closely linked to student retention. A common theme in the interviews was the need to improve OA practices so that staff must contend with fewer misconceptions about the program during orientation.

3. Orientation Housing

Centers take varied approaches to housing new students during the orientation period. Most centers (about 58 percent) integrate new students with the longer-term residents, assigning them to their permanent dormitories immediately upon arrival. Other centers place new students in temporary quarters with other new students, either in separate orientation dorms or in rooms or floors reserved for new students.

Those centers that house new students separately feel that doing so reduces their fears about safety and eases their adjustment to center life. Those that choose to integrate new students right from the beginning did not comment on the relative merits of this approach. One center had a pilot program to house new female students in a separate orientation dorm to see if female retention would improve. It was too early in the pilot at the time of our visit to determine if the change was having the desired effect.

B. RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

Residential living support services are an important part of the Job Corps model. They are essential to ensuring a secure, attractive physical and social environment that promotes student achievement. Residential students are housed in dormitories. The primary staff with whom students come into contact in this setting, and who support students in all aspects of their Job Corps experiences, are the RAs and, to a lesser extent, the counselors. This section describes the typical residential facility and the roles and responsibilities of the RAs. It also provides a description of the support services provided to the sizable minority of Job Corps students who are nonresidential and the child care programs available to parenting students (nonresidential and residential) at some centers. The counseling program is addressed in the following section.

1. Dormitory Facilities

Residential students are housed in dormitories that provide bathing and toilet facilities, space to store personal belongings, and common areas for relaxing and doing laundry. The typical Job Corps center has four or five dormitories, with an average total capacity of about 350 students. Students generally share a dormitory room with three to five other students (Table VI.2), and they often find the transition to group living difficult. As shown, larger room capacities are common at CCCs, but most rooms are small and lack privacy. A typical arrangement we observed was a set of bunk beds and lockers to store personal belongings. Table VI.2 shows the dormitory facilities, including bathrooms, laundry, and student lounges, that are shared by many students. On average, about 20 students share a bathroom, 80 share laundry facilities, and 50 share a common lounge area. More students are typically assigned to each bathroom and laundry facility at CCCs. Females tend to have fewer roommates and lower ratios of students per bathroom and shower facility. Most dormitories maintain separate housing areas for males and females, although a minority of dormitories are coeducational, with males and females housed in separate areas. Student assignment is generally based on gender and availability but vocational choice also affects assignment at a few centers.

During our on-site visits, the quality of the bedrooms and bathrooms and the amount of personal space were cited as important dimensions of satisfaction with residential facilities. Many staff commented, and our observations confirmed, that these are areas frequently in need of improvement. Upgrading dormitory facilities was a commonly voiced strategy for improving student retention, especially for females.

Special Facilities. A few centers offer special accommodations for select populations of students. These include single-parent housing and married-student housing.

TABLE VI.2

RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Students by Dorm Room Capacity (Mean Percentage of Students)				
1 to 2	16	7	22	14
3 to 5	49	31	57	53
6 to 8	26	41	17	30
9 to 10	5	13	2	1
More than 10	5	8	3	3
Students Sharing Common Facilities (Mean Number of Students)				
Bathroom/Shower	23	30	22	18
Laundry	83	88	76	94
Lounge	49	47	52	48

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

2. Residential Advisors (RAs)

RAs supervise students in the dormitories, which are staffed at all hours, though the late afternoon and evening shift naturally has the most contact with students and as a consequence is the most heavily staffed. Many managers view these "prime-time" RAs as the backbone of center residential life. They are the closest adult figure on center to a parent or guardian and thus serve as important role models for the students. The relationships that the students develop with RAs are therefore very important in shaping student behavior. While recognizing the importance of the RA position, most managers also acknowledge that this pivotal position suffers from low wages and high turnover. Many centers rely heavily on temporary staff to fill gaps created by turnover of RAs. These employment conditions suggest a basic inconsistency between programmatic goals and personnel practices related to residential living.

RAs have a broad and varied set of responsibilities that include student supervision, dorm governance, group discussions, informal counseling, SST, student performance evaluations, and a range of accounting and paperwork tasks. These are described in greater detail below.

Student Supervision. RAs make sure the dormitories are clean and safe and that students are behaving appropriately. They assign and supervise students in the task of cleaning their rooms and common living areas. They typically use student assistants to help manage the dorms and to assist with new students. RAs are also responsible for student discipline.

Dorm Meetings and Informal Discussion Groups. These are usually regularly scheduled weekly activities to address dorm issues or problems that have arisen. Special group sessions can be conducted on personal hygiene, relationships, or basic housekeeping skills. At some centers, these events are scheduled several times a week, while at others they occur weekly or less often.

Informal Counseling. Because of their proximity to the students and the leadership function they perform, RAs frequently engage in informal counseling. They identify and assist students who are having trouble adjusting to the center, and they listen to and support students having family or interpersonal problems. Students who are observed to be having unusual difficulties adjusting to center life are referred to counseling.

Social Skills Training (SST) Groups. At most centers, RAs facilitate SST groups for the residential students after class or in the evenings. About three-quarters of the RAs interviewed reported that they had received some SST training prior to leading sessions, either from other center staff or from written and video materials.

P/PEPs. RAs provide input in the pre-panel meetings and are present and contribute to the panel meetings at most centers. Those centers adopting a P/PEC model continue to involve RAs in the preliminary meetings but not directly in the P/PEC session. As with SSTs and dormitory meetings, the RAs who perform this function work the prime-time shift.

Administrative Paperwork. For each student, RAs keep files that typically contain the STAR report, P/PEPs, SST log, incident reports, results of the dorm court or disciplinary actions taken, property inventories, injury reports, counseling records, leave reports, locker checks, and an anecdotal log. They also keep a daily log of events on their shift to communicate with staff working the next shift.

3. Nonresidential Support Services

During our site visits, staff stressed the importance of the residential component of the Job Corps program. Residential life is seen as central to helping resocialize students. Some staff believe that it is even more important than vocational training for the future of the students. However, staff centrally involved in nonresidential components of the program note that a different student is reached through this part of Job Corps. These are students who most likely would not enroll in Job Corps if a nonresidential option were not available, because of outside commitments to their families or children.

Approximately one-quarter of all Job Corps centers have a nonresidential component that is "significant," defined as 20 percent or more of all slots reserved for nonresidents. In these centers, nonresidential students are fully integrated into the academic and vocational components of the Job Corps program, but their experiences and participation in other aspects of center life are quite distinct. The key differences are described below.

Dedicated Counselors. At most centers, dedicated counselors are assigned to nonresidential students. They provide a variety of services to these students that residential students would receive from both counselors and RAs. These include counseling and SST services. At a minority of centers, the same counselors serve both residential and nonresidential students. However, even in these centers, the nonresidential students typically do not participate in SST or group counseling with residential students. Nonresidential students are viewed as requiring a greater level of counseling services, mainly because Job Corps has less control over the environment of this group. Nonresidential students often seek counseling services because of housing problems or other difficulties at home.

Transportation. Daily transportation to the center can be a major obstacle for nonresidential students. Job Corps students are often dependent upon public transportation or the assistance of family or friends. Some students told us that they had to travel over an hour each way and use bus transfers to get to and from the center. Centers that are well served by public transportation pose the fewest challenges for students. A small minority of centers provide transportation for nonresidential students.

Recreational Activities and Special Events. Nonresidential students are less likely to participate in recreational activities, student government, or special events that occur outside class. Many of them have either children at home or outside employment obligations that make it difficult for them to remain on center after hours to participate in center activities. Transportation at later hours of the day or evening can also represent a major obstacle to after-hours activities. Staff expressed a desire to provide transportation to students in these situations but did not feel that adequate resources were available to permit this. As a result, nonresidential students do not tend to be well integrated into student life on center.

Child Care. Students who are also parents face unique challenges in Job Corps. These students spend time with their children while not engaged in Job Corps activities, and they must arrange for the care of their children while at Job Corps. Some centers offer child care on site, but many others require that students find their own resources in the community. Even if child care is available on center, nonresidential students must arrange for backup care or miss classes if their child is sick. Centers with a significant proportion of nonresidential students expressed a strong interest in establishing an on-site child care center if they did not already have one.

Outside Commitments and Influences. Residential students are removed from their home environment and are relieved from many of the commitments they might have had if they had remained at home. Nonresidential students, in contrast, maintain strong ties and links to home and often have substantial commitments and obligations during the hours that they do not attend Job Corps. Outside commitments often include family obligations and jobs. In addition, the negative home or neighborhood influences that contributed to their need for the training and social development offered by Job Corps remain present for them. For all these reasons, nonresidential students tend to have greater problems with attendance and retention. On the other hand, students who successfully meet the challenges of their home environment and remain committed to the program may find it easier to transition out of the program after graduation. During our site visits, we encountered many nonresidential students who were highly committed and were successfully meeting the challenges both in Job Corps and outside.

Behavior Management System. Managers report fewer disciplinary problems with nonresidential students, because the time they spend on center is shorter and more structured. Therefore, there is less need to have a behavior management system. However, when a problem does occur, the sanctions and incentives that make up the Job Corps behavior management system are not as effective for nonresidential students. This is because nonresidential students do not participate in many of the activities (such as off-center fieldtrips) that are used as incentives, or as privileges that are denied, to achieve behavioral goals.

Participation Expectations. Residential students perceive that nonresidential students are not held to the same standards. They are not required to do the same level of chores and have different attendance requirements. One center we visited had recently started requiring nonresidential students to participate in chores, which had apparently served to ease those tensions.

Prime-Time Program. In 1987, Job Corps began a pilot program to see if an evening (or prime-time) program would better serve the needs of female students who have children and have dropped out of school in the surrounding communities. Only one prime-time program is still in existence. This program currently has a capacity of 55 students--50 females and 5 males--a modest increase over its original size, and was operating over capacity (at 66 students) at the time of our site visit. The admissions process for this program is the same as for other students, although recruitment is necessarily local. When asked about the advantage of evening over daytime nonresidential programs, officials noted improved attendance. This was attributed to evening hours being less likely to conflict with other appointments or with the care of sick children and to the direct provision of transportation and child care to students enrolled in this program.

4. Child Care

Most Job Corps centers do not provide child care for the children of enrolled students. Child care programs are currently available at 19 centers (18 percent) nationally (Table VI.3). All the centers providing child care are non-CCCs, and most are located in or near urban centers, where a larger than average percentage of students are nonresidential. As described below, Job Corps centers support three types of child care arrangements, of which two are designed to accommodate nonresidential students and one to serve residential students.

Nonresidential Programs Using Local Resources and Funding. This is the most common type of child care arrangement found on Job Corps centers. These programs operate through the establishment of linkages with state human resources or welfare departments, school systems, JTPA, JOBS, Head Start, or locally available low-cost programs. Seventeen centers provide child care during the day using this model. One additional center uses this model to support its prime-time program.

Nonresidential Programs Using Job Corps Funds. Two centers nationally are supported by Job Corps funds. These centers provide child care during the day for nonresidential students attending Job Corps.

Residential Single-Parent Programs. At these centers, special dormitory facilities are provided for residential students who are also mothers, allowing the young children to live with their mothers and participate in a day care program during the day while their mothers are engaged in classroom activities. This arrangement is available at six centers nationally.

TABLE VI.3

CHILD CARE PROVISION AND UTILIZATION
(Percentage of Centers)

	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Child Care Capacity				
None	83	100	78	73
45 or Fewer Slots	13	0	14	19
46 to 65 Slots	5	0	6	8
Utilization of Child Care Slots (Percentage)				
50 or less	32	NA	33	29
50 to 75	21	NA	25	14
76 to 100	47	NA	42	57

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NA = not applicable.

Where child care facilities are available, they generally operate close to capacity (Table VI.3). Child care programs operating on center that are not at full capacity are permitted to enroll children of staff members and, if room is still available, children from the surrounding community. At centers that participated in the site visits, there was evidence that staff do take advantage of this opportunity.

Child care programs have been developed primarily to serve women who have young children and would otherwise be prevented from enrolling or would be more likely to drop out. During the site visits, centers that offer child care expressed satisfaction with their program and with their ability to serve this population of women. Staff at centers that served a large proportion of nonresidential students and that did not offer child care expressed an interest in having a program.

C. COUNSELING

Counseling services play a vital role in the operation of a Job Corp center for both residential and nonresidential students. All Job Corps centers provide students with a variety of counseling services, including educational guidance; vocational, personal, sexuality, drug/alcohol and placement counseling; family planning; social skills development; and evaluation of student progress. This section describes the primary duties of the counseling staff, the methods used to assign counselors, and the strengths and weaknesses of the program as perceived by the counseling staff.

1. Counselor Duties

The counseling role encompasses personal and therapeutic counseling, substance abuse and sexuality counseling, and academic and vocational advising. Counselors also are pivotal in monitoring student progress. Counselors lead or participate in a broad range of activities to meet these program requirements.

Student Orientation and Adjustment. Counselors conduct an initial intake interview with new students during the first week of orientation. They learn about students' goals and concerns and assess whether students are at risk of leaving the program. Students commonly find it difficult to adjust to group living with others who come from disparate backgrounds. The highly structured environment they encounter at Job Corps is also unfamiliar and poses adjustment problems. Homesickness is common. Counseling, both individual and in small groups, is provided for all new students, with extra services available for students at risk of leaving. Counselors are responsible for bringing to the attention of other staff those students who require extra services and to coordinate the delivery of those services.

Individual Counseling. A major portion of a counselor's time is taken up with individual counseling. A typical counseling schedule comprises a mix of scheduled appointments, arranged as part of a regular monthly meeting or upon referral from another staff member, and walk-in appointments either during open office hours or in response to a specific issue or crisis.

Small Group Counseling. Small group sessions are used, primarily with new students, to address common adjustment issues. Topics include conflict resolution, anger management, stress management, homesickness, pregnancy prevention, and sexual harassment. Group sessions provide an opportunity for students to ask questions and review center rules, to meet and form social connections with other students, to discuss fears and adjustment issues, and to vent frustrations. Counselors also view orientation groups as another opportunity to observe each new student in a social context and assess whether anyone needs additional services or support to adjust adequately to center life. Many counseling programs also include an optional small group counseling component that covers topics such as sexuality and pregnancy, anger management, victims of abuse, and support groups for men and women, gays and lesbians, and students of color.

Goal Setting. Counselors help students with their academic and vocational goal-setting in a formal way through their role in preparing an employability development plan (EDP), and informally through the scheduled counseling sessions. Counselors also approve vocational training course changes.

P/PEPs and P/PECs. Counselors play a major role in monitoring student progress in the Job Corps program. At almost all centers, counselors chair the P/PEP sessions and review with the students the evaluations provided by the other panel members. At the centers that have adopted a P/PEC model, counselors meet one-on-one with students to review their progress. Additional information concerning these models for monitoring student progress is provided in Section E.

Student Advocates. When students encounter difficulties with their training or social adjustment, counselors are often the staff members who try to resolve the situation. They also serve as advocates for the students in their dealings with court systems, welfare agencies, and their families. However, both students and counselors reported some dissatisfaction. For example, in the focus groups, students expressed a lack of close and positive relationships with noninstructional staff, especially counselors and RAs. Many students saw counselors as too busy or under too much stress to be interested in the individual student. Some also expressed a lack of trust in counselors and were concerned that discussions would not be kept confidential. Although these complaints are not uncommon in interactions between youth and counselors, counselors themselves were sometimes critical of their own performance. Many counselors felt that their caseloads were too large. Others were critical of counselors who appeared to organize their schedules around their own interests rather than those of the students.

Staff Training. Counselors provide in-house training for other staff in a number of areas. They are required to provide SST to staff, but they also train them in their individual areas of specialty, such as counseling techniques, suicide prevention, crisis intervention, and equal employment opportunity.

Paperwork. Counselors complete paperwork for student leaves and travel, graduation or transfer to another program, and unexcused absences from the center. Counselors reported that tracking students who are absent from the center without permission is very burdensome. Several counselors expressed dissatisfaction with the required paperwork, estimating that it occupies from one-third to one-half of their time.

2. Assignment of Counselors

Counselors are typically assigned a caseload of students by vocation or by dormitory. Some centers have a specific orientation counselor to work with new students, while at others, counselors add new students to their existing caseload and continue to work with them throughout their time at the center. Most centers assign nonresidential students to designated counselors who may serve only nonresidential students or a combination of residential and nonresidential students.

There is wide variation across centers in the location of counseling services and the hours that services are available. At some centers, counselors have offices in the dormitories; at others, counseling services are centralized. At some centers, counselors work a standard day shift, whereas at others, they mix day and evening shifts. During one interview, a counselor expressed concern about students' access to counseling services because so little of the time that counseling is available falls when students are not in class. This counselor had asked to work on Saturdays and found that doing so helped him reach students at a time when they had greater need for services and more time to reflect on and address issues that were troubling them.

The size of a typical counseling caseload varies a great deal across centers. Most counselors we interviewed described their caseload as consisting of from 60 to 85 students, although caseloads of as few as 25 and as many as 113 were reported. In general, caseloads for nonresidential students are smaller. This finding is consistent with counselors' statements that nonresidential students typically have a greater need for counseling services.

Forty percent of all counselors we interviewed felt that their caseloads are too large and prevent them from providing effective, individualized counseling to all students. While almost all counselors reported fulfilling the minimum counseling contact requirements (one contact per student per month), many perceived an unmet need for additional counseling services.

3. Strengths and Weaknesses of Counseling Program

Counselors offered their impressions of the strengths and weaknesses of the counseling program. Their assessment of what works and what needs improvement includes the following elements:

- ***Early focus on and identification of at-risk students is a strength of the program.*** Most interviewees emphasized the importance of the counselors' early identification of at-risk students, either through intake procedures or through regular staff meetings focusing on student adjustment and retention. Successful strategies include increasing one-on-one or group counseling sessions, working with RAs to develop an "action plan" for the student, and peer monitoring. An underlying theme that emerged from these various strategies was the importance of connecting at-risk students to center activities and to positive peers. Several staff indicated that these strategies were in place prior to the introduction of the 30-day probationary-period policy, while others indicated that the change in policy had increased their attention to at-risk students during the first days and weeks on center.

- ***Small group orientation counseling contributes to student adjustment.*** Counselors view these group sessions as an opportunity to meet and form social connections, to discuss fears and adjustment issues, and to share frustrations with peers.

- ***Smaller caseloads would increase counselors' ability to provide effective, individualized counseling services.*** This was a consistent theme for counselors whose caseloads were around 70 students or larger.

- ***Extensive paperwork requirements interfere with counselors' ability to provide students with direct services.*** Those counselors who identified this as a problem estimated that they spend at least a third of their time on paperwork.

D. SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Students enter Job Corps with a wide range of social skills. According to staff, the skills that are most often lacking among new students are:

- Responding appropriately to aggression and rumors
- Communicating and listening
- Personal hygiene
- Punctuality and attendance
- Consideration and respect (of both self and others)
- Respecting diversity
- Problem-solving
- Asking for help
- Basic manners (including appropriate language)

Developing social skills is an important part of the Job Corps student's experience, and Job Corps has developed an SST curriculum to address this area. To the question of how long a student with minimal social skills needs to be in the program before showing a noticeable improvement in behavior and social abilities, the average response was three months. However, the range of responses was very broad.

The curriculum has recently been revised in response to criticism from a variety of sources and to the recent focus on school-to-work. However, the new curriculum was not yet in place at the time of this study. Therefore, the observations and commentary provided next reflect the program as implemented in 1996. A brief summary of some of the salient features of the curriculum reform is provided at the end of this section.

1. Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Participation in the SST program is mandatory. The SST curriculum has 50 lessons. Centers are required to use the established curriculum but are encouraged to supplement the base curriculum with additional materials approved by the center director. The lessons address topics such as "asking permission," "being left out," "teasing," and "honesty and accusation." Student progress through the lessons is recorded in a STAR, which is included in the student's overall performance assessment.

Social skills are taught in small groups, typically by an RA (94 percent). Counselors facilitate the SST sessions for nonresidential students. Sessions are generally held on a weekly basis (96 percent) and typically last one hour (83 percent), although a few centers reported longer (12 percent) or shorter (4 percent) sessions. In practice, we observed that sessions are often cut short when students appear bored and restless (or listless).

Students generally remain in SST until they leave Job Corps (89 percent) and receive sanctions for failure to attend (98 percent) (Table VI.4). Penalties are sometimes minimal (22 percent), such as repeating a lesson or receiving a verbal warning, but are more often of greater consequence (60 percent), such as a written incident report, a fine, a counseling referral, or a dorm court referral. At a small number of centers (2 percent), the consequences of missing an SST session are severe, such as a loss of privileges. Some centers have adopted an incremental approach (15 percent) whereby each absence is subjected to an increasingly severe penalty. CCCs more consistently apply intermediate penalties.

SST sessions are usually conducted in a lounge or similar setting in the dormitories (for residential students), after classes have ended for the day. However, there are some striking

TABLE VI.4

ATTENDANCE AT SST SESSIONS AND PENALTIES FOR NONATTENDANCE
(Percentage of Centers)

	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Attendance Required After Completion of All Lessons	89	70	94	100
Level of Penalties Imposed for Missing an SST Session				
No/minimal penalty	23	13	26	29
Intermediate penalty	60	77	49	63
Incremental penalty	15	10	23	4

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

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exceptions. One center we visited holds many of its sessions during the training day in the context of a vocational class. The session we observed involved staff from a variety of programmatic areas in the SST session, including a vocational instructor, a records clerk, and a store manager. One observer described the students in this session as "surprisingly attentive" in comparison to those observed during other site visits.

Most SST facilitators follow the curriculum closely. The sessions observers described as the most lively tended to be the ones that deviated the most from the standard curriculum. Those that followed the curriculum closely often appeared forced and unnatural.

RAs do not receive extensive training or feedback in their role as SST facilitators. While three-quarters of RAs interviewed said they received some type of training, it was sometimes little more than written and video instruction. Although counselors are required to observe SST and provide ongoing in-service assistance, this requirement did not appear to be uniformly met. In at least one-third of the centers visited, counselors did not routinely observe RAs. At some additional sites, counselors observed, but in a pro forma way: their observations were not used to improve the facilitation skills of the RAs.

2. Weaknesses in the SST Curriculum

Those who commented on the value of the SST program in place during our visit were divided in their assessments. There is general agreement that many students entering Job Corps have a real deficit in this area and need improvement. Thus, staff are positive in their support for the concept of SST. However, many staff were critical of the program as it existed in 1996 and 1997. Criticisms included the following:

- ***The curriculum content is too repetitive and simplistic.*** The curriculum was often described as "boring," "condescending," and "insulting." It was described as aimed at the lowest level of social skills found among students, rendering it inappropriate for many of the students.

- ***Students should be allowed to "test out" of the curriculum.*** Several staff commented that students with high levels of social skills or students who had completed the curriculum should be allowed to exit the program rather than be required to continue, often repeating lessons, until they graduate.

- ***The curriculum needs to be redesigned.*** Many staff expressed a desire for changes in the curriculum, with the primary changes being the addition of advanced lessons and sessions focusing directly on workplace social skills. Several staff members were optimistic that the emerging emphasis on school-to-work training would include a major modification of the SST curriculum to address employment-related social skills specifically. They hoped this would reduce the difficulties students face keeping the jobs they obtain after graduation.

Although we were not able to make a formal assessment of the reactions of staff or students to the newer curriculum, it appears that the first and last of the above criticisms have been addressed in the revised program. Students are still required to remain in the program while attending Job Corps, but the content of the training is no longer aimed at such an elementary level, and it has incorporated many elements directly tied to workplace behavior and relationships.

E. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

One of the most important elements of the residential living component is the evaluation of a student's progress. Each center must implement an evaluation system to ensure that every student reaches his or her potential while enrolled in the program, taking into account the student's individual educational, vocational, and social needs.

1. P/PEP Structure

The cornerstone of student evaluation is the Progress/Performance Evaluation Panel, or P/PEP. The purpose of this required panel is to assess student performance in all major program areas and guide the student in an ongoing self-assessment and goal-setting process. A student's assigned panel must include the following people:

- The individual student being evaluated
- The student's counselor
- An education instructor
- A vocational instructor
- An RA or SST training facilitator (for nonresidential students)

Preferably, the panel uses the student's own instructors and advisors/facilitators, but other representatives of these programs are also permitted to serve as panel members. The chair of the panel must be a staff member to whom the student is assigned; program guidelines recommend the student's counselor.

Between 30 and 45 days after the student arrives on center, panels convene for the first time to assess the student's initial adjustment to center life and to establish training and social goals. Thereafter, panels are required to meet every two months to review student progress and performance. Before each formal panel meeting, the student must meet with his current instructors and RA or SST facilitator to discuss progress and performance during the past two months. Each staff person rates the student on a variety of evaluation factors; these ratings become part of the permanent Student Performance Evaluation Record (SPER), which is forwarded to the chair of the panel.

After reviewing and discussing the student's evaluation record, the panel makes recommendations to the director regarding the student's training (course or schedule changes), social training performance, incentive awards, bonuses, and readiness to exit the program. When behavior or attendance problems are present, the panel can recommend that the student enter into a performance contract (usually 30 days). The contract specifies behavioral changes required and consequences if the conditions of the contract are not met.

Panels are required to assess the overall performance of each student and make recommendations for cash bonuses. To be considered for a bonus, the student must, at a minimum, receive satisfactory ratings from evaluators in all program areas. The panel can take into account other factors besides evaluator ratings in deciding whether to recommend a bonus for that student to the center director.

Staff Involvement in the Panel. Although the Job Corps Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) requires the student's assigned counselor to participate in the evaluation panel, not all centers follow this guideline (Table VI.5). While virtually all contract centers (99 percent) assign the student's own counselor to the panels, CCC practices in this area are less uniform. Over a third of CCCs indicated that counselors besides the student's own counselor serve on the panel.

Similarly, centers use different approaches to staffing the other members of the panel. As shown, most centers rely on the student's own vocational instructors, as well as counselors, to staff the panels. CCCs place the most emphasis on involving the student's own vocational instructor in the evaluation process: 90 percent of CCCs use the student's instructor, compared to only 65 percent of primarily residential and 52 percent of significantly nonresidential centers. Inability to bring contracted vocational instructors into the P/PEP process is the main reason center directors gave for this group's reduced participation.

In contrast to vocational and counseling panel members, centers often fill the RA slot with a staff member who does not supervise the student directly. Only about half the centers are committed to using the student's own RA on the P/PEP panel. Throughout the system, even less emphasis is

TABLE VI.5

P/PEPs

	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Panel Membership (Percentage of Centers)				
Student's Counselor	89	63	100	96
Student's Vocational Instructor	69	90	65	52
Vocational Instructor from Same Trade	7	10	4	12
Student's Academic Instructor	24	7	33	24
Student's RA	49	45	54	41
RA from Same Dormitory	20	17	22	18
Students Perceive That "My P/PEP Panel Helps Me Set Realistic Goals" (Percentage of Students)				
Very True	50	45	48	57
Somewhat True	35	39	36	31
Not Very True	10	10	10	8
Not at All True	6	6	6	5

SOURCES: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey; Student Satisfaction Survey, June 1996.

placed on filling the panel's slot for academic instructor with a current instructor: only 24 percent of centers have a policy of using the student's own instructor; for CCCs, this figure drops to 7 percent.

Special P/PEP. When staff identify a student who is in trouble or struggling, they commonly recommend a special P/PEP session to address these problems and possibly consider termination. All but one of the sites visited hold special P/PEP sessions, which can be called at any time by staff or students. The special P/PEP is used primarily as an intervention tool for students who exhibit behavior, attendance, or performance problems. In addition, centers sometimes use the special P/PEP format to review student requests for changes in their vocational/academic schedule, to prepare students for termination, or to address special problems or needs.

Maximum Benefits System. As part of the overall student evaluation system, centers must also implement a "maximum benefits system" to ensure that each student "reaches his or her maximum potential while enrolled in the Job Corps program." Like the P/PEPs evaluation structure, the maximum benefits system must use a formal panel and must assess the student's progress in the academic, vocational, and social arenas.

In practice, the maximum benefits panel is called when a teacher recommends that a student be considered for termination. Unlike special P/PEP panels, which usually address motivational or behavioral problems, the maximum benefits panel is called for students who are unable to do the academic work. Examples cited during our staff interviews all involved students with very low basic skills or learning difficulties that had prevented them from completing their academic course of study.

Only a small fraction of Job Corps students participate in the maximum benefits process. In the previous year, most centers had terminated only a few students through this process. Some centers had not terminated any students for months under maximum benefits provisions; a few centers did not have a formal panel process in place to assess maximum benefits issues.

Alternative P/PEC Structure. Some centers have obtained a waiver from the regional office to amend the P/PEP structure, replacing the panel format of the P/PEP with a counselor-student meeting, referred to as Progress and Performance Evaluation Counseling (P/PEC). Of the 23 sites visited, 4 had adopted the P/PEC structure. Under this format, the student still meets with individual instructors and the RA (or SST facilitator) prior to the P/PEC to go over the evaluation of his or her recent performance. In the follow-up formal meeting, the student discusses the evaluation with the counselor, instead of with the larger panel. Centers that have moved away from the panel cited the amount of time required for scheduling the P/PEPs as a major factor in their decision.

2. P/PEP Effectiveness

Staff are divided in their assessment of P/PEP effectiveness. Counselors, who usually chair the panel and have the greatest involvement in the process, are largely positive in their assessments. Most counseling staff interviewed feel that the panels constitute an effective system for monitoring student progress, providing feedback, and motivating students to perform. According to proponents of the system, the P/PEP's major strengths include bringing together the various program components into one forum, increasing interdepartmental communication, and evaluating the whole student. RAs support the P/PEP system for similar reasons.

However, other staff view the P/PEP process as less effective and more problematic. For example, in two-thirds of the staff focus groups, participants emphasized the need for revision and improvement of the P/PEP. Even among those groups who largely favor the P/PEP, participants want to see changes to make the system more effective. Multiple P/PEP-related issues emerged from the observations, interviews, and focus groups conducted during the site visits, as described next.

Implementation Problems. While defending the concept of P/PEPs, many interviewees and focus group participants find fault with the implementation. For example, staff describe the rating system used to evaluate student performance in the three major program areas (academic, vocational, social) as highly "subjective"--that is, either the rating criteria are unclear or staff do not consistently adhere to them. Some staff members are too severe, giving a less-than-satisfactory score even to a student who has complied with all the requirements for the period. Other staff members are very lenient.

Another problem is that panel members often have no direct personal connection to the student. A panel member who does not serve as the student's instructor or advisor is not necessarily familiar with the student's performance. This lack of connection with the student may contribute to staff taking a pro forma approach to the P/PEP, lessening its value as a process for engaging the student in self-assessment and goal-setting. A number of interviewees suggested that the true value of the P/PEPs resides in the pre-panel meetings students attend several days before. At these meetings, students interact one-on-one with their assigned RAs and instructors; staff have more flexibility to spend time discussing the evaluation and drawing students out.

On-site observations of P/PEPs confirmed that implementation varies considerably from center to center. At many centers, the panel's main functions are to formalize the evaluation findings of others, to reiterate goals for the student, and to take care of paperwork. The panel appears to hurry through the process, with little attempt to engage the student in useful discussion of performance and goals for the future. Sessions are frequently no longer than 10 minutes. At a few centers, the panel members engage the students on a more personal level and are less paperwork-oriented. They spend more time asking students questions and involving them in the evaluation and goal-setting process.

Cumbersome Administrative Structure. Staff critical of P/PEPs also question its basic structure, primarily because of the administrative burdens it imposes. Many experience difficulties in scheduling the panels and find the administrative requirements of the panels too time-consuming (for example, too much paperwork and too many people to coordinate effectively). For these reasons, several sites have moved away from the P/PEP to the more streamlined P/PEC. Staff at these centers generally report that they are happy with the new structure. They believe that what they have sacrificed in abandoning the full panel is rewarded by a reduction in both staff time commitments and scheduling difficulties. A few directors also stated that counselors are generally able to spend more time with each student under the P/PEC structure.

The new structure has its detractors, however. At one center, the RAs were less enthusiastic about P/PECs because they now had fewer formal linkages with other staff. While they did not advocate a return to the P/PEP structure, they felt that it was important that RAs remain involved in the student assessment process. Directors at a few centers using the P/PEC structure were also concerned about losing a team approach to evaluating students and were less convinced of the advantages of the new approach.

Problems with the Bonus System. Sizable numbers of staff criticize the bonus rating system attached to the P/PEP (or P/PEC). They feel that bonuses either are too easy to obtain or are awarded to students inconsistently. As mentioned above, eligibility for bonuses is based strictly on the evaluation scores of instructors and RAs. However, many staff believe that these scores do not truly reflect the student's performance, because staff use such different criteria for the scoring.

Moreover, many staff expressed concerns about the restriction of giving bonuses to no more than 35 percent of students. Specifically, during any given evaluation period, if a higher percentage of students qualify, some deserving students do not receive the bonus. At a number of centers, students routinely meet or exceed the minimum evaluation score needed but do not receive a bonus. As a result, many students and staff at these centers perceive the system as unfair. Several centers have recently addressed this issue by revising their scoring system to make qualification for a bonus more difficult.

Student Perception of the Usefulness of P/PEPs. The Job Corps quarterly student survey includes a question about students' view of the utility of P/PEPs in helping them set goals (Table VI.5). Students were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement "My P/PEP panel helps me set realistic goals." Overall, students do feel that P/PEP panels are of use to them in setting realistic goals. Eighty-five percent of students responding to the June 1996 survey answered "very true" or "somewhat true" to this statement. Favorable assessments were more common among students at centers run by private contractors and at those with significant nonresidential components.

F. INTERGROUP RELATIONS (IGR)

The IGR program is designed to reduce prejudice, prevent discriminatory behavior, and increase understanding among racial/ethnic groups and between men and women. The program includes three phases: Phase I, a short introduction during new-student orientation, varying in duration from 1 to 4 hours; Phase II, a cultural-awareness course, consisting of approximately 15 hours of classroom instruction, taught after students have been on center for a few weeks; and Phase III, monthly centerwide cultural events. Some centers supplement the standard curriculum with additional material such as videos, maps, films, outside speakers, and information about the local cultural history. Phase I and II activities are mandatory at all centers. Phase III activities are mandatory at some centers but voluntary at others.

All but one of the centers visited has an IGR committee responsible for planning the ongoing cultural events that make up Phase III of the program. At most centers, staff are chosen to represent various departments and serve a specified term (usually six months to two years), but a few operate on an entirely volunteer basis with no term limits. Students on the committee are generally selected to represent their dormitory, but at one center they are selected to represent a cultural group. In another center, students were not included at all on the committee. The size of IGR committees ranges from a handful of members to several dozen. Committees meet monthly or more often at some centers but only occasionally at others.

At least one planned event is required each month. Eight months of the year, there are preplanned activities specified in Job Corps, usually centered on a cultural group or a nationally recognized holiday or celebration. For example, Black History month is the topic of one of these activities. For the remaining four months, the committee is free to develop programs of specific interest to the student population at that center. Examples include: Native American programs, a Thanksgiving dance and candlelight dinner, Arbor Day to take care of the environment, International Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, LBJ birthday, Cinco de Mayo celebration, Hawaiian Luau, Christmas giving programs, comparative religion events, and field days. Most staff indicated that the cultural events are well received and well attended by students. Popular events focus on ethnic foods or music. Professional entertainers and competitive events with prizes available were also described as big draws. One staff member commented that students tend to prefer events that celebrate their own cultural backgrounds.

G. RECREATION

The recreation component of the Job Corps experience is believed to be very important in retaining students in Job Corps, especially residential students. It also contributes to the larger goals of Job Corps on a number of dimensions. The goals of the recreation program, as described by the staff, are to:

- Promote social skills
- Promote team-building
- Provide a structure and an outlet for leisure time
- Keep students happy
- Promote wellness
- Reinforce the behavioral management system on center

All centers have some type of recreation program. Recreation programs include a mix of structured activities (such as team sports and fitness classes) and unstructured activities (such as open hours at a gym, activity center, or TV room). Cultural events are also an important part of the recreation program at many centers. While many of the cultural activities involve trips off center, a few are held on center, such as an international club for foreign students, movies, and an African dance club.

Recreation programs vary considerably across centers, ranging from very small, with only a few facilities and structured activities, to very large, with many activities and a wide array of athletic fields, gyms, swimming pools, and game rooms that serve both students and the wider community. The quality of the facilities also varies. For example, some gymnasiums are so small that there is no room for spectators, while other facilities are spacious.

During the site visits, it was evident that some staff and students are pleased with the recreational opportunities available at their center, while at others the recreation program is a major focus of complaints. At centers with limited recreational opportunities, students clearly expressed feelings of having been misled by OA counselors. Their disappointment when what they found did not meet their expectations was clearly and loudly articulated in the focus groups.

On-Center Facilities. Facilities that are available on center offer students daily recreational opportunities. Most Job Corps centers have space for arts and crafts, a game room, a TV room, a gymnasium, athletic fields, and a library (Table VI.6). Approximately one-third of the centers have a swimming pool. Recreation facilities are generally more extensive at rural centers (not shown), at CCCs, and at centers with predominantly residential students.

A few centers offer separate facilities or classes for women, including weight rooms and aerobics classes. Staff told us that these separate facilities were a recent change, in response to low participation rates from women and feedback women provided about what would encourage greater use.

Off-Center Facilities. Nearly all centers (98 percent) use community recreational facilities to supplement what is available on center. These are generally not as accessible as on-center facilities. Community facilities commonly used by Job Corps centers include swimming pools, athletic fields, community gyms, and community recreation centers. Use of these community facilities is highest among those centers that lack these resources, many of which are located in urban areas. At rural centers, field trips to make use of off-center facilities require a greater degree of planning and more extensive travel. Other supplemental facilities commonly used off center include skating, bowling, horseback riding, and miniature golf. Many centers are involved in community leagues in sports such as basketball, softball, and swimming, whereas other centers rely entirely on intramural team sports. Off-center facilities are also used to supplement the cultural activities available on center. These include movies, theater, concerts, museums, and visits to historical sites. At many centers,

TABLE VI.6

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
(Percentage of Centers)

	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
On Center				
Gymnasium	90	97	91	81
Athletic fields or courts	88	100	91	69
Swimming pool	31	23	33	35
Space for arts and crafts	99	100	100	96
Game room	97	100	100	89
TV room	96	100	96	92
Library	84	77	91	77

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

field trips and other off-center activities are available only to students who are in advanced phases and thus serve to reward students for good performance.

Recreation Staffing. The staff of the recreation programs includes managers, specialists, assistants, and a variety of student aides. Some centers supplement Job Corps staff with community expertise in such areas as martial arts and aerobics instruction, volunteer coaches for team sports, and entertainers for special events. Outside staff resources used for special events on center include DJs or musicians for dances, and clowns and balloon artists for carnivals. Some centers report difficulty attracting and retaining recreation staff. Several managerial positions in the recreation program were vacant at the time of the site visits.

Students participate in the recreation program as student aides. To serve as an aide, students must be in good standing and must receive basic leadership training. At a few centers, students are paid or receive vouchers at the student store. At other centers, the positions are unpaid but students receive extra privileges in exchange for their services. Student government gets involved in planning recreation activities. The level of input of students into the design of the recreation program appears to vary from minimal to very active.

Participation of Students. Participation in events varies from center to center. Some centers report high levels of student participation, while others report low levels. Game rooms, TV rooms, and other on-center facilities tend to be heavily used. Some team sports are very popular and have high levels of organized participation. However, at other centers, staff reported that they have ceased to offer some sports because of lack of interest. Results of the mail survey show that most residential students participate in at least one regularly scheduled center-organized recreational activity in a typical week. Participation rates below 30 percent for residential students were reported by fewer than 10 percent of the centers; rates exceeding 80 percent were reported by more than one-quarter of the centers. Male residential students participate in organized activities at higher rates than do female residential students. A full 82 percent of centers reported weekly participation rates of over 60 percent for male residential students. For female residential students, only 61 percent of the centers reported participation rates that high.

Nonresidential students participate in organized activities at lower rates than do residential students, with 50 percent of the centers reporting weekly participation rates at 10 percent or below. Outside commitments and transportation difficulties are major reasons for low rates of participation.

A number of features of recreation programs appear to influence participation levels:

- ***Extent and Variety of Facilities and Staff.*** If few facilities are available to students, participation levels tend to be low. Lack of facilities can also lead to scheduling difficulties, with few options at any given time. Where gymnasiums and athletic fields are in short supply or entirely absent, this poses a real difficulty for centers. Closely related to adequacy of facilities is the level of staffing. If too few staff are available, the facilities may not be able to accommodate as many students as they otherwise could.

- ***Staff Devotion.*** The level of enthusiasm evident among staff, and their commitment to making programs accessible and fun for students, appears to influence participation levels greatly. Creating access for students after classes as opposed to waiting until after dinner also appears to make a difference. One center told us they had recently begun to open the facilities at the end of the training day instead of waiting until later in the evening. This provided students with a constructive outlet at a time of day when they had tended to get into trouble in the local community.

- ***Level of Student Input.*** Closely related to staff devotion, recreation programs that reach out to students to find out their interests and to adjust recreational opportunities to fit student demand are more successful in generating high participation levels.

- ***Quality of the Facilities.*** Participation levels are influenced not only by the availability of recreational facilities but also by the quality of those facilities. For example, at some centers the use of the gymnasium is limited by a lack of room for spectators or a lack of air conditioning, which renders the facility essentially unusable for large parts of the year.

- ***Required Participation.*** One center told us that they require students to participate in recreational programs on a weekly basis. At this center, students are required to participate in at least one arts-and-crafts project and one cultural activity, as well as spend two hours in a group activity and four hours in an individual activity. This center reported high participation levels and was the only center that indicated that recreational participation was addressed during P/PEPs.

- ***Effort to Include Nonresidential Students.*** Most (but not all) centers reported low levels of participation by nonresidential students. Some centers, however, obtain high participation levels for nonresidential students by supplying transportation when needed and providing programs specifically designed to appeal to nonresidential students. Responding to feedback from students about the programs they want was mentioned as an important element in successfully engaging students.
- ***Effort to Create Environments Conducive to Female Participation.*** A few centers have directly addressed lower female participation rates by creating specialized facilities for female students or reserving a few hours per week for female-only use.
- ***Level of Structure.*** Many of the most popular recreational activities require organization and structure. These include team sports and trips off center. Programs that rely on unstructured activities may get a lot of participation in a few activities (games, TV) but appear less likely to engage students in those activities that are most likely to contribute to the stated goals of the recreation program.

H. STUDENT GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Centers foster student leadership through student government and through structured leadership training programs. Leadership skills are an important part of the social development that Job Corps provides to students. The programs seek to instill pride and positive attitudes; teach communication skills, group dynamics, and parliamentary procedures; and build self-esteem. These programs also provide important opportunities for student input into the residential living component of Job Corps.

1. Student Government

Administrative guidelines require each center to establish "with maximum student participation" some form of elected student government, often referred to as the Student Government Association, or SGA. At a minimum, the SGA structure must include a council composed both of elected members representing each dorm and of nonresidential students. All students, including nonresidential ones, can vote for student representatives on the council, but not all students are eligible to hold office. To be eligible, candidates must complete a leadership training course (described later in this section) and maintain a good behavior record. Some centers also impose a minimum length of stay and other requirements on students seeking to participate in student government. Officers are usually selected either by the student body as a whole or by other council members. The center assigns a staff advisor to provide guidance to the SGA, which must meet at least every two weeks.

The main purpose of student government is to provide students with a voice in how the center is run. The SGA is supposed to have direct access to and meet with the center director regularly to discuss the issues and concerns of the student body. Student leaders from the SGA are typically assigned to various center committees or to individual staff involved with the following programmatic areas:

- Orientation programs
- Recreation programs
- Behavior management
- Food service and snack bar operations
- Student or dorm courts
- Community relations
- Intergroup relations programs
- Center safety programs

Student Welfare Association. Student government is also responsible for operating a student welfare association, which manages profits derived from center canteens, vending machines, pay phones, student fines, and student fundraisers. In consultation with other students, the association recommends how these funds should be spent for the benefit of students. The funds available can be considerable: centers reported that the welfare association has as much as several thousand dollars in monthly income. The funds are used primarily to sponsor center social events, student trips, and student welfare programs (such as student loans and scholarships). Some centers also use funds to support center club activities, while others purchase electronic and recreational equipment.

Variation in Structure and Operations. Several variations on the basic governance structure outlined above were encountered during the site visits. Eligibility screening is one source of variation. At one end of the spectrum, some centers stipulate that students, to be eligible for student government, must have been on center 90 days, achieved a certain "phase level" within the center's incentive system, received a certain P/PEP score, and obtained written approval from several staff. Centers with minimal entry requirements ask only that students be on center for 30 days and have a clean record and may require only that candidates sign up for a leadership course rather than complete the course prior to election time.

Another source of variation is the level of involvement in the behavior management system (BMS). Most SGAs are active in the BMS through participation both on the Center Review Board (CRB) and on student courts. All centers appear to have at least one student representative on the CRB. The level of involvement on student courts is less consistent. At most centers, SGA leaders also staff student or dorm courts. However, at several centers the SGAs have no apparent involvement in dorm court discipline. At these centers, dorm courts either do not exist or function as an independent structure set up through the dorms.

The level of interaction with management is a third source of variation. At some centers, SGA members meet only once a month (or less frequently) with the center director and the scope of the meeting appears limited. For example, at one center the meeting is simply a one-on-one conference between the center director and the SGA president to go over minutes from the previous SGA meeting. At other centers, the meetings are more frequent, sometimes even weekly, and the purpose is more clearly to have an open, direct exchange of ideas between students and management. In a few centers, student representatives also participate in management team meetings; however, most interviewees did not emphasize regular and direct contact with the management team as a whole.

Most welfare associations confine themselves to overseeing the funds generated by vending machines and canteen/snack bar concessions. Students are frequently employed by the concessions but contractors provide the management of the operation. Only a few welfare associations play a larger role in hiring staff, stocking the store, or managing other aspects of the concessions operation. The student government at some centers directly supports student clubs by earmarking a portion of welfare association funds for club operation. A few centers have a variety of active clubs, but many appear to have few or no student organizations beyond the SGA.

Most important, the level of influence that students feel they have on the residential living component of Job Corps appears to vary. About one-half of the SGA advisors interviewed feel that student government plays an influential role in center decision-making. A substantial minority of advisors, however, characterize the SGA's role and influence as limited. Student government is involved in formal center evaluation in only a few centers.

Assessment of Student Government's Role. Most SGA advisors feel that SGA structure is effective in providing students a voice on center, enhancing leadership skills, and connecting students in positive ways to the outside world. For example, a number of interviewees highlighted the benefits of community service projects that SGA members participate in or help organize. Only one advisor mentioned difficulties with involving nonresidential students in SGA. At most centers, student representatives sit on a full range of committees but appear to be most active and influential in four main areas: student orientation, student discipline, recreation and social-event planning, and food service.

Advisors who characterize student government as less active or effective cite the following shortcomings:

- ***Difficulty Maintaining Student Interest.*** A sizable minority of advisors describe difficulties in sustaining student interest and participation in student government. For example, some sites experience problems with student representatives' attendance at meetings. In at least a few sites, the student government or the student welfare associations have become inactive for periods of time. Some advisors believe that the center needs to establish stronger incentives for student government participation. Some centers do have clear incentives, such as linking involvement in student government to dorm privileges and perks or to driver's licenses.

- ***Need for Students to Have a Greater Voice.*** Some advisors feel that center management and staff do not give students the independence and organizational support they need to be effective. One center, for example, handpicks student council members, instead of permitting dorms to vote on candidates.

- ***Need for More Leadership Training.*** As described next, leadership training is a prerequisite for holding different leadership positions, including student government offices. Some advisors feel that students need intensive or ongoing training if the skills and effectiveness of student leaders are to be improved.

2. Leadership Training

To prepare students for student government and other responsibilities on center, all centers must establish a structured leadership-training course. At a minimum, the course must cover the objectives of Job Corps, principles of leadership, and human relations. However, centers commonly include additional topics, such as communication skills, conflict resolution, and team-building. Most centers also break the course components into two or more phases consisting of core training and advanced coursework. All the centers we visited require students to take core or even advanced training before becoming a dorm leader, student aide, or member of student government. In about half the centers, counseling staff or training specialists conduct the course, while in the others recreation staff, RAs, education instructors, and management staff from various departments are responsible for the training.

Program Variation. Centers have wide latitude in the implementation of the leadership program and exhibit considerable variation in the level of training provided and the number and type of student selected to participate. The training course varies in length from as little as 3 hours to as many as 20, with most centers providing between 10 to 15 hours of training. Some centers offer intensive training, covering the course in under a week, but most offer the training in one-to-two-hour segments stretched out over many weeks.

A minority of centers require all students to take the initial course segments, and one center indicated that this training takes place during orientation. Students then elect to receive further training, subject to eligibility requirements. At most centers, however, only students who volunteer, or who are nominated and recruited by staff, participate in any of the training. In this context, the training is designed to funnel students into student leadership roles rather than to provide a general leadership-training experience for all students. Centers frequently require extra training in parliamentary procedures and other subjects for students contemplating running for student government. Variation in eligibility requirements may depend, in part, on the importance attached to having experienced student leaders and on the center's need to fill leadership vacancies.

Issues and Recommendations. Staff members involved in leadership training are generally committed to the program and positive about its benefits both for the center and for the individual students. However, they raise several issues:

- ***Expansion of the Curriculum.*** The most common suggestion for improving leadership training is to increase the hours of training and to add curriculum components beyond what is required. Interviewees mentioned team-building, community service, and other "hands-on" activities as things they would like to see incorporated into the program.

- ***Participation of Nonresidential Students.*** The special needs and status of nonresidential students is another issue. Some centers have changed the training time to midafternoon in order to accommodate nonresidents. One center mentioned lack of transportation for nonresidents as a potential issue. At several other centers, nonresident students either do not participate in training or take a scaled-back version of the training.

I. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The BMS is an essential element of each center's residential life program. There are three basic systems for managing student behavior: a disciplinary system, an incentive system, and the student evaluation system (P/PEP or P/PEC). Additional components of the system include student participation in the BMS through student government councils or dorm courts, a center standards officer to oversee the BMS, and a center review board to hear disciplinary discharge cases. P/PEPs were discussed in Section E; this section addresses the other components of the BMS.

Disciplinary System. The key elements of the disciplinary system are clearly articulated rules and sanctions and a process for determining appropriate sanctions. Centers can apply a range of sanctions in response to infractions of the rules, from a reprimand (for less serious infractions of the rules) to expulsion (for serious offenses). Intermediate sanctions include small fines, extra work assignments, and loss of privileges. The two main requirements are that sanctions be appropriate to the student's offense and that they be consistently applied. Centers typically inform students of center rules and expectations during pre-orientation contacts prior to the students' arrival. All sites publish center rules and sanctions in a student handbook, which they present to all new students upon arrival. In addition, most centers emphasize the center's system of rules and sanctions on the first day of orientation and again in initial counseling and dorm meetings. Students do feel that the center rules have been clearly explained to them.

As described earlier, in program year 1995, Job Corps introduced an expanded "zero-tolerance" policy requiring centers to expel a student for engaging in any violence or drug or alcohol use on center. In addition, the new policies dictated a 30-day probationary period for students (since revised to 45 days); those who test positive for drugs at the end of the probationary period are supposed to be sent home. Previously, centers had greater discretion in dealing with serious rule violations; some had adopted a lenient policy, allowing for multiple offenses before a student was expelled.

Incentive System. Program guidelines also require each center to establish an incentive system for all students. At a minimum, a center's incentives must include merit increases in allowances and awards for achievement and other positive behaviors. In addition to awards and pay incentives, students can receive bonus pay through the P/PEP process as described earlier.

Almost all centers (96 percent) have some form of incentives in place. At least half have established elaborate and highly visible "phase systems" for rewarding positive student behavior. Students who attend classes, obey center rules, participate in activities, and display other positive behaviors pass through different phases. With each successive phase, students receive awards, small prizes, greater freedom, and privileges and special perks, such as fewer roommates and larger dorm rooms. Through negative conduct, students also risk being demoted to an earlier phase.

Student or Dorm Courts. With the guidance of a staff advisor, student courts (often referred to as dorm courts) handle minor rule infractions, as defined by the center's student handbook. A few centers also involve students in formal mediation as an alternative way to handle disputes between students, but this does not appear to be a common practice. The student court, composed of elected representatives from each dorm, has the authority to determine disciplinary action for students who come before it. A student who disputes the sanctions imposed by his or her peers has the right to appeal the court's decision to the Center Standards Officer (see below).

Center Standards Officer (CSO) and Center Review Board (CRB). Appointed by the director, the CSO administers the BMS and is responsible for disciplinary actions on center. The

CSO reviews the actions of the student courts and hears appeals. The CSO also conducts investigations of more serious charges against students. When warranted, the CSO recommends a disciplinary discharge of a student to the CRB, whose five members are appointed by the director. The CRB conducts hearings and makes recommendations on disciplinary discharges to the director, who has the final say.

1. Effectiveness of the BMS

Almost all center directors and staff judge their center's BMS to be moderately effective to very effective. Interviewees agreed that a number of factors contributed to the effectiveness of the BMS, as described next.

Use of Incentives. Incentives were one of the most frequently mentioned aspects of the BMS. Most CSOs we interviewed, as well as many counselors, RAs, and security staff, emphasize the importance of incentives and rewards for good behavior as critical components of the BMS. In those systems perceived to be functioning well, staff point to the use of incentives as the major factor. Conversely, in systems that are perceived to be less effective, interviewees feel that adequate incentives are lacking. Security staff and CSOs clearly and consistently articulated the relationship between a *systematic* use of incentives (the phase system) and overall effectiveness of the BMS. Several centers indicated that they are instituting a more comprehensive "phase system" to strengthen the incentive aspect of the BMS.

Significantly, nonresidential centers face a greater challenge in developing an incentive-based system that works well for nonresidential students. Many of the incentives for good behavior are oriented toward allowing students greater privileges and center-based perks and therefore are not as applicable to the lives of nonresidential students.

Student Involvement with the BMS. Many staff believe that student involvement in the BMS is a key element in the overall effectiveness of the system. Staff define student involvement in the BMS in informal as well as formal terms. Formal student participation includes serving on the CRB, on dorm courts, as peer mediators, and as dorm leaders. In addition, student government representatives routinely sit on staff behavior management committees or meet with the CSO. Most centers believe that student leaders have an influential voice through these structures. Staff also describe informal participation of students through positive role modeling and peer pressure. In an effective system, students "buy into" the rules, monitor each other's behaviors, and resolve problems informally before they escalate to the point where staff need to be involved.

Staff Involvement in BMS. Another common theme to emerge from center interviews and focus groups concerned staff involvement in the BMS. A number of counselors, RAs, and security staff view broad-based staff enforcement of center rules as a critical element contributing to the overall effectiveness of the BMS. Virtually all centers (96 percent) consider the disciplining of students to be a responsibility shared by the entire staff. However, in practice, only a few CSOs describe their staff participation rate as high. Almost two-thirds of CSOs report that a percentage of their staff is reluctant to confront rule-breaking students and correct their behavior. Some staff "look the other way" when students are misbehaving; others choose to write up the student (submit a written report to the CSO for investigation), but without directly confronting the student or discussing the problem at the time of the infraction. CSOs see this response as a missed opportunity to work with the student, believing that such writeups are not as effective as personal contact in modifying the behavior.

Another common issue raised about the BMS by both students and staff is lack of consistent enforcement of everyday rules. The reason frequently given for inconsistent enforcement is that not all staff interpret the disciplinary rules in the same way. Some staff might choose to talk with a student to problem-solve while, for the same behavior, others might give the student a writeup, which leads to a penalty. Staff perspectives on this issue reflect two distinct camps: those who feel enforcement is generally too lax and penalties too mild and those who find their colleagues too harsh and too ready to use negative sanctions. In many focus groups, staff expressed concerns that inconsistent enforcement translates into unfair treatment of students. Moreover, students receive a mixed message because they do not always see a uniform consequence resulting from certain behaviors.

2. Assessment of Zero Tolerance (ZT)

CSO and security staff are universally in favor of the new ZT policy. In interviews, over two-thirds offered specific examples of how life had improved on center since the implementation of ZT. While not quite as unanimous in their support and enthusiasm, other staff are also generally positive in their assessments of ZT, for a variety of reasons. Many credit the ZT policy with reducing violence, curbing both drugs and alcohol on center, and improving the learning environment. Moreover, prior to ZT, administrative regulations made the process of expelling a disruptive student from the center more difficult and time-consuming. Staff also believe that ZT helps create a better student pool because more students who drink and use drugs now self-select out of the program, while focused students self-select in. Data from negative incident reports, described in Chapter VII, support this view.

Need for Greater Flexibility. While most other staff (counseling staff, RAs, instructors, administrators) applaud the benefits of ZT, they also raised concerns about its inflexibility. In focus groups, for example, staff questioned the current implementation of ZT as it applies to substance abuse. Concerns centered largely on the need for greater flexibility in applying ZT to students with drug problems. In many groups, a consensus emerged that 30 days is an insufficient probation period: the universal application of a 30-day trial forecloses opportunities for staff to work with students who have the potential to be successful in Job Corps but need more time to become drug free. In October 1997, the period was changed from 30 days to 45 days in response.

Inconsistent Application of ZT. Centers are not entirely uniform in their implementation of the ZT policy. For example, about one-third of the centers do not adhere to true zero tolerance with regard to alcohol. At these centers, staff are afforded more flexibility in terminating students with an alcohol-related violation. Some centers allow up to three alcohol-related violations before termination. In addition, at some centers staff report that ZT policies for violence are difficult to interpret and implement consistently and fairly. Moreover, as described in Chapter IX, students who are likely to contribute to center performance outcomes are more likely to be given the benefit of the doubt in a ZT-related charge and retained.

Student Perception of Discipline System. The Job Corps quarterly student survey includes a question relating to the discipline system on center. Students are asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement "The center discipline system is fair." In June 1996, students were mixed in their assessment of the fairness of the discipline system (Table VI.7). While most students indicated agreement with the statement (68 percent overall responded "very true" or "somewhat true"), fewer than half of these (only 31 percent overall) responded "very true." Students attending centers with a significant proportion of nonresidential students perceive that the system is fairer than do students at either CCCs or primarily residential contract centers.

J. HEALTH SERVICES

Health services are an important support for students. The ability of students to benefit from the Job Corps program depends, in part, upon their health and safety. This includes both ensuring

TABLE VI.7

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE SYSTEM
(Percentage of Centers)

	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
The Center Discipline System Is Fair				
Very true	31	27	29	43
Somewhat true	37	40	38	32
Not very true	18	19	19	14
Not at all true	14	15	15	11

SOURCE: Student Satisfaction Survey, June 1996.

that students entering the program are healthy and fit to pursue their academic and vocational goals and maintaining their health during their tenure on center. Initial health screening to ensure that students meet medical eligibility requirements is conducted by the screening agency prior to acceptance into the Job Corps program. The Job Corps Health Questionnaire (ETA 653) and the Supplemental Medical Consent Form must be individually administered to each applicant during the screening interview. All health information provided by the applicant must be received on center five days prior to the applicant's arrival, and most centers indicated that they do receive the paperwork in a timely fashion. In addition, residential students are required to sign a Supplemental Consent Form for HIV Testing. If accepted, students are required to submit to a medical examination, including a blood test for HIV, within two weeks after their arrival on center.

To be eligible under the Job Corps medical criterion, an applicant must be free of any health condition (medical, psychological, or dental) that (1) represents a potentially serious hazard to the youth or others, (2) results in significant interference in the normal performance of Job Corps duties, or (3) requires intensive or costly treatment not normally available through the Job Corps medical program (PRH-6, July 1990). Otherwise-qualified handicapped applicants are reviewed by the regional office for final acceptance and, if necessary, assignment to a designated center that is accessible and can provide reasonable accommodation.

Health Services Offered. All centers are required to offer basic medical services to students on center, including:

- Routine medical, dental, and mental health care
- Daily sick call or open appointment system and any necessary specialist referrals and consultations
- Access to emergency medical, dental, and mental health care on a 24-hour basis
- Health education program

In addition to these standard requirements, some centers offer additional services, including optometry, physical therapy, pharmacy, minor surgery, ob-gyn, and medication management for mental health problems. Others contract with these or other specialty services off center.

Medical terminations are not common, but they do occur for females in their seventh month of pregnancy, for serious injuries, for failure to submit to required tests, or for mental health conditions that the center cannot treat. Students have no right of appeal for medical terminations at some centers, but at others they do (although they rarely use it). Students may be allowed to re-enter the program once the problem is addressed.

Student Ailments. According to health services staff, common health complaints from students include:

- Seasonal complaints (colds, allergies, upper-respiratory infections)
- Sport-related injuries
- Stress-related pains (headaches, stomach aches)
- Depression

Some centers also commented that they try to address, through organized programs or individual treatment, problems students tend to have with obesity, smoking, and dental health. Many staff indicated that Job Corps could improve the wellness programs offered. Staff also commented that depression is a growing medical concern among students and that some students arrive on center already on medication for depression.

AODA Program. Job Corps centers employ counselors who specialize in alcohol and other drugs of abuse (AODA). When students first arrive on center, they are required to take a drug test. If they test positive, they must attend the AODA program. Other students may participate voluntarily. During the first four weeks on center, the AODA specialists conduct group sessions with at-risk students, supplemented with individual sessions as needed.

With the implementation of a probationary period, the role of AODA specialists underwent a dramatic change. Although the probationary period was extended from 30 to 45 days in October 1997, the 30-day period was in effect at the time of our site visits. Therefore, staff reactions reported here are based on the 30-day period. We have not had the opportunity to observe the effects on the AODA program of the later increase to 45 days.

After the new 30-day policy went into effect, fewer students who use drugs enrolled, both because they self-select out of Job Corps and because OA counselors changed their approach to screening for drug use. In addition, students that continue to have a problem are terminated within the first 30 days. Before the change in policy, AODA counselors had the authority to decide which students they should continue to work with and which should be terminated. This authority had been largely eliminated at the time of our visits.

Many Job Corps center staff believe that both drug and alcohol use has declined in response to the policy change. The number of positive tests among new students is still high at many centers (staff reported from 25 percent to 50 percent), although at some centers this represents a reduction over positive test rates obtained prior to the new policy. However, some staff are concerned that drug and alcohol use may have gone underground to some extent. Few suggested that drug or alcohol use was a problem on center (a clear ZT violation), but off-center use does occur.

The role of the AODA program in addressing alcohol use may have suffered from the new ZT policy. The concern is that in cases where use is suspected, staff and fellow students are now more reluctant to refer students to the AODA program knowing that the consequence might be termination rather than treatment. Similarly, students with substance abuse problems may be less likely to come forward for treatment. One RA commented that alcohol use may have increased as a result of the collapse of the AODA at the same time that other drug use has declined. Alcohol use may have simply moved underground instead of being eliminated.

VII. CENTER OPERATIONS: ADMINISTRATION

The last three chapters described the primary services of the Job Corps program at a center: vocational training, basic education, and residential living. High-quality services require effective center management and administration. In particular, centers must recruit and hire qualified staff, and they must provide a safe and secure environment in which effective learning can take place. In addition, centers must be managed to produce high-quality student outcomes and to meet (or exceed) the performance standards established by the Job Corps National Office. In this chapter, we describe center administration related to staffing and safety/security. In Chapter IX, we describe the Job Corps performance management system and how it affects center operations.

A. CENTER STAFFING

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff is critical for center operations, and the local market is likely to have great influence. In small towns and rural areas, centers often are the major employer. In these settings, recruiting skilled staff at the prevailing wage can be a problem, but staff turnover tends to be low. It may also be difficult to develop a staff mix that matches the gender and racial composition of the students. In larger labor markets, recruiting staff who have the right skills and match the student profile is easier, but turnover can present problems.

This section presents data in several areas that shed light on the tenure and turnover of center staff, discusses issues surrounding recruitment, and provides information on the characteristics of Job Corps staff.

1. Overview of Center Staffing

The organizational structure of Job Corps centers varies considerably depending on size, type (whether contract center or CCC), and the style of the operator. Typically, both vocational training and academic education are under the direct supervision of a single manager who reports to the director. In larger centers, vocational training and academic education may have separate directors who hire, train, and supervise the instructors. Residential living forms a second major division within most centers. Its director oversees residential advisors (RAs), counselors, recreation specialists, and orientation staff. In most centers, security, health services, and administrative services (personnel, finance, payroll) are separate departments, also reporting to the director. Key center staff and their roles include:

- ***Managers.*** Provide overall management on center
- ***Vocational Instructors.*** Provide the vocational testing and instruction
- ***Academic Instructors.*** Provide the academic testing and instruction
- ***Counselors.*** Facilitate students' participation in Job Corps and provide individual and group counseling services to students
- ***Residential Advisors.*** Work in the dormitories and supervise student life after training hours
- ***Recreational Staff.*** Plan recreational activities and supervise the center's recreational facilities
- ***Orientation Staff.*** Organize and implement orientation services for new students
- ***Health Care Workers.*** Provide a range of medical, dental, and mental health services
- ***Security Staff.*** Maintain internal safety and security, sometimes involving the surrounding community
- ***Placement Staff.*** Assist students in the transition from Job Corps to employment or further education and training and coordinate with placement contractors

Centers employ most of these staff directly. However, contracting is common, principally for medical services and for certain types of educational and vocational services. Physicians, dentists, and psychologists are typically retained under part-time contracts, while nurses and physician's assistants are likely to be full-time employees.

About half the centers indicate that they contract with outside educational institutions for some aspects of their academic program, typically to provide GED test services or on-center college courses. Several centers contract with a local school district that allows Job Corps students to earn credits toward their high school diploma. In one center, the entire academic program is contracted to a college. Contracted educational services are usually paid for based on an agreed-upon per-student fee.

On average, centers have approximately 130 employees, although this figure varies greatly according to the size of the center (Table VII.1). Approximately 14 percent of all center staff hold management or administrative positions, 11 percent are vocational instructors, 10 percent are academic instructors, 6 percent are counselors, and 18 percent are RAs. Overall, about 21 percent of all staff are in instructional positions, which is only slightly larger than the percentage who are RAs. Furthermore, other staff--health care, security, placement, maintenance, and food service--make up over 40 percent of all staff. The high percentage of staff in residential and other positions reflects the comprehensive nature of the Job Corps program, which delivers many other services in addition to classroom training.

There are some important differences in staffing patterns by center type. In particular, nearly 30 percent of staff in CCCs are involved in instructional activities, compared to only about 18 percent in contract centers. The difference is especially large for vocational instructors (with 17 percent of all staff in CCCs serving as vocational instructors, compared to 9 percent for contract

TABLE VII.1

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF, BY POSITION AND CENTER TYPE
(Percentage of All Staff)

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Senior Management	7	10	5	6
Other Management	7	4	8	8
Vocational Instructors	11	17	9	9
Academic Instructors	10	12	9	10
Counselors	6	6	5	9
Residential Advisors	18	19	20	12
Other Staff	41	31	44	47
Approximate Average Total Number of Staff	**130**	**65**	**190**	**135**

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

centers) and for other staff (with 31 percent of CCC staff in other positions, compared to about 45 percent in contract centers). In part, this pattern is due to size differences, with the smaller CCCs having fewer specialized staff, and with some core staff covering the duties of more than one position. Not surprisingly, significantly nonresidential centers devote fewer resources to RAs.

2. Staff Experience and Turnover

Overall, a high proportion of staff have been working at centers for only a brief period (Table VII.2). About one-quarter (24 percent) of all staff have less than one year of experience on center, and another 22 percent have been at the center no more than two years. At the other extreme, 16 percent have been employed for more than 10 years.

Staff tenure varies dramatically by center type. CCCs have high percentages of staff with long tenures. For example, 26 percent of CCC staff have been employed at their current center for over 10 years, compared with only 11 percent of staff at primarily residential centers and 15 percent of staff at significantly nonresidential centers. This difference is expected, for three reasons: (1) CCCs have a longer operating history, (2) CCC operators do not change as a result of contract recompetition, and (3) most CCC staff are federal civil service employees. Staff experience and tenure also vary considerably by region (see Appendix Table B.24).[1]

A large percentage of staff with brief tenure indicates high staff turnover, and the data in Table VII.2 show substantial turnover in several positions, with that of RAs and counselors at contract centers especially high. In primarily residential contract centers, about 38 percent of staff in each position have been employed for a year or less; in significantly nonresidential centers, about

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[1] Only 18 percent of the staff in contract centers in Region 9 have less than a year of experience, as compared to 40 percent or higher for staff in contract centers in Regions 1 and 5. Contract centers in Regions 4 and 9 have considerably higher proportions of long-term staff (seven years or more) than contract centers in other regions.

TABLE VII.2

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF EXPERIENCE, BY POSITION AND CENTER TYPE
(Mean Percentage of Staff)

	Total	CCC	Contract Primarily Residential	Contract Significantly Nonresidential
Number of Years				
Less than 1	24	13	32	21
1 to 2	22	16	24	23
3 to 6	27	30	23	29
7 to 10	12	15	10	12
10 or more	16	26	11	15
Senior Management (Years)				
Less than 1	19	11	28	11
10 or more	26	36	19	30
Other Management (Years)				
Less than 1	16	3	24	12
10 or more	27	46	20	24
Vocational Instructor (Years)				
Less than 1	22	11	28	22
10 or more	17	29	10	18
Academic Instructor (Years)				
Less than 1	21	12	26	21
10 or more	18	24	13	19
Counselors (Years)				
Less than 1	27	12	38	24
10 or more	13	26	7	10
Residential Advisors (Years)				
Less than 1	28	13	37	25
10 or more	13	24	6	12
Other Staff (Years)				
Less than 1	26	15	34	21
10 or more	13	20	9	13

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

one-fourth of staff have been employed for a year or less. In sharp contrast to this pattern, the turnover at CCCs is no higher for RAs and counselors than it is for other positions.

Many centers acknowledge a turnover problem with RAs because of the low pay, shift work, and "burnout" associated with the job. Opportunities for advancement within the centers and the larger Job Corps system also play a role. Because this is an entry-level position, good RAs often move into other positions when openings occur. In contrast, only 16 to 19 percent of management staff have less than one year of experience in their position. In all positions, turnover at CCCs is markedly lower than at contract centers.

Staff Vacancies and Time to Fill Position Openings. The mail survey collected information about current staff vacancies. At the time of the mail survey, nearly all centers had some staff vacancies, most for a wide range of positions (Table VII.3). Ninety percent of the centers had at least one RA vacancy, nearly 80 percent had vacancies for vocational and academic instructors, and about three-quarters had vacancies for counselors or senior management. Consistent with the data on staff experience, fewer CCCs had staff vacancies in each position. However, many CCCs have vacancies in RAs, vocational instructors, and senior management at levels similar to those of significantly nonresidential centers. Primarily residential centers were most likely to have staff vacancies in all positions.

Table VII.4 provides data on the average number of months centers take to fill vacancies for the different staff positions. On average across centers and positions, 72 percent of staff vacancies are filled in less than two months, and less than 3 percent of the vacancies take longer than six months to fill. The data indicate that vocational instructor, senior management, and RA take somewhat longer to fill, with 35 to 40 percent of such openings taking two months or more, compared to 20 to 30 percent for other positions. The most common reasons that center staff cited for extended vacancies are low salaries and, for centers located in rural areas, a shortage of skilled workers.

TABLE VII.3

PERCENTAGE OF CENTERS WITH STAFF VACANCIES, BY POSITION AND CENTER TYPE

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Any Staff Position	99	97	100	100
Senior Management	73	67	76	73
Other Management	64	10	85	81
Vocational Instructors	79	70	87	73
Academic Instructors	77	60	83	85
Counselors	74	40	87	85
Residential Advisors	90	83	100	77
Other Staff	99	97	100	100

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

TABLE VII.4

DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE TIMES TO FILL STAFF POSITIONS
(Average Percentage)

	Months to Fill Position				
Staff Categories	Less than 2	2 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 12	More than 12
All	72	18	7	2	0
Senior Management	63	21	12	4	1
Other Management	79	13	6	2	0
Vocational Instructors	61	26	9	3	0
Education and Orientation Instructors	71	21	6	2	0
Counselors	70	19	9	1	1
Residential Advisors	65	23	10	2	0
Other Staff	76	15	5	3	1

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: Estimated for centers with vacancies.

CCCs take more time to fill staff vacancies, at least in part because they must adhere to civil service hiring procedures. Although not reported in Table VII.4, contract centers, on average, fill nearly 80 percent of all open positions in under two months, whereas CCCs fill only 38 percent of all their open positions that quickly. Contract centers appear to have a particular advantage with the harder-to-fill senior management positions, which they almost universally reported being able to fill within six months. CCCs, by contrast, reported that 15 percent of these critical management positions remained unfilled after six months. Of course, the remote location of many CCCs may also play a role in the longer time required to fill vacancies.

Centers typically employ substitute teachers, RAs, and other nonmanagerial staff to fill in temporarily for absent employees. However, some centers use substitute staff more extensively, relying on them to cover for extended staff leave or vacancies. Several centers indicated that they frequently fill permanent jobs with long-term substitutes already working in the position.

3. Staff Recruitment and Wage Structures

Most contract centers use internal hiring and promotion as an important staff recruitment strategy, especially for management positions. Those affiliated with the larger training corporations generally advertise management job openings first within the corporate system before moving on to other recruitment sources. In contrast with management jobs, however, entry positions are most frequently filled through walk-in applicants, local advertising, and recruitment at local colleges.

CCCs appear to have much less flexibility and control over the hiring process than their private counterparts.[2] Civil service requirements guide the recruitment and hiring process, which is carried out by the agency in charge of the CCC rather than by the individual center, and these requirements may prevent CCCs from responding quickly to hiring needs. Contract centers and CCCs also use different methods to determine staff wages and salaries. About two-thirds of all contract centers use a prevailing-wage scale, and the remaining one-third pay staff according to a company wage scale, determined by a central office. All CCCs pay staff according to a federal government wage scale.

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[2] However, many centers operated by private contractors are subject to the oversight of their corporate headquarters. Corporate offices are sometimes heavily involved in the personnel decisions of their centers, reducing the center director's control over the hiring process.

Vocational instructors must be certified, licensed, or accredited. Where national trade or unions provide the training, staff must be certified by the union or trade organization. In these situations, centers retain managerial authority over the trade or union staff, but recruiting and hiring is not handled by the center. This makes it difficult for centers to manage vocational instructors that are not performing effectively.

Center managers reported that vocational training staff are generally not difficult to recruit, although, as noted earlier, the time required to fill these positions is greater than average. Key reasons for the relative ease of filling these positions (and for low turnover) include:

- Favorable work conditions (steadiness, regular hours, benefits, indoor environment)
- Fewer discipline problems and less parental interference than in the public schools
- Ability of staff to live at home rather than at the job

Some drawbacks were cited, however:

- Year-round teaching schedule, with no spring break or summer vacation
- Undesirable locations (difficulty in recruiting minority staff to isolated centers in rural areas, difficulty in recruiting staff to work in warehouse district for inner-city center)
- Perceived problems with student discipline and lack of motivation
- Certificate requirements and having to deal with bureaucracy

Most centers reported that salaries for vocational staff are lower than those in other public education. Instructors provided by national contractors are the major exception to this: they are paid union wages, which are typically more than salaries in public education. Despite low salaries, staff at most centers said that turnover and attrition in the vocational education component is lower than at most other public educational institutions.

Most centers hire certified teachers to be academic instructors. Center managers said that turnover among academic staff is lower at Job Corps centers than at nearby educational institutions. The following factors facilitate recruiting and retaining Job Corps academic staff:

- Newspaper ads generate enough applicants in most locations, which suggests an ample supply of teachers.
- Teachers have fewer problems with students because of the stricter discipline of Job Corps compared to public schools.
- Many teachers like to work with Job Corps youth, who they believe are serious and trying hard to overcome past problems.

Various factors also were cited as impediments:

- Low salaries (especially in light of the 12-month schedule of Job Corps compared to the 9-month public school schedule)
- The isolated location of many Job Corps centers, which also makes it difficult to recruit minority staff
- Perceptions of having to work with "problem" students at Job Corps

Many centers hire new teachers from the ranks of their substitute teachers, who understand the pay scale, know how to work with Job Corps students, and have demonstrated their abilities. Retired teachers were also mentioned often as a source of candidates for academic instructor positions.

although several center staff said they wanted to increase the number of younger teachers, who may be better able to relate to students.

Staff incentives of various kinds appear to be an integral part of center personnel policies. Many centers provide small cash awards or extra vacation time to employees who make special contributions to the center or propose useful innovations. The notion of merit-based bonuses for staff, while not as widespread as incentive pay, is gaining popularity. About one-third of the centers visited either have recently instituted or are planning to institute merit-based bonuses as part of the overall staff payment structure. Several centers already link the performance evaluation and pay of vocational instructors to their students' placement outcomes.

4. Staff and Student Composition, by Gender and Race

In Job Corps, as in other education programs, it is desirable that students have adults of their own gender and ethnic group available who can serve as mentors and role models. To achieve this, Job Corps staff should reflect the gender and ethnic composition of Job Corps students. In this section, we provide information on the gender and the racial and ethnic backgrounds of Job Corps center staff and students to determine the extent to which staff and students match on these key dimensions.

As Table VII.5 shows, 52 percent of all Job Corps staff are males and 52 percent are white, non-Hispanic. Thirty-three percent are black, non-Hispanic; 10 percent are Hispanic; and 3 percent are American Indian or Alaskan Native. Not surprisingly, the gender and racial compositions of staff at CCCs and contract centers are quite different. CCC staff is predominantly male (62 percent), whereas only 50 percent of staff at primarily residential centers and 45 percent at significantly nonresidential centers are male. The racial/ethnic composition of CCC staff is also less diverse.

TABLE VII.5

GENDER AND RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS, BY CENTER TYPE

(Percentage)

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Staff				
Male	52	62	50	45
Female	48	38	50	55
White (Non-Hispanic)	52	77	49	28
Black (Non-Hispanic)	33	15	37	43
Hispanic	10	3	7	24
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	4	4	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	0	2	4
Students				
Male	59	72	58	46
Female	41	28	42	54
White (Non-Hispanic)	39	61	32	27
Black (Non-Hispanic)	43	24	50	49
Hispanic	12	9	11	18
American Indian/Alaska Native	5	5	5	3
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	1	2	3

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

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White staff make up over three-fourths of all CCC center staff (77 percent), compared to 49 percent in primarily residential centers and 28 percent in significantly nonresidential centers.

The average gender and ethnic composition of students is reasonably similar to that of staff, especially gender composition: 59 percent of students are male (compared to 52 percent of staff) and 39 percent are white non-Hispanic (compared with 52 percent of staff). The gender/ethnic differences among staff across the types of centers are also present among students: a higher proportion of students at CCCs is male (72 percent) and a higher proportion is white non-Hispanic (61 percent) than is true at the contract centers.

To quantify the comparison of the gender and racial similarity between center staff and students, we computed an *index of dissimilarity*. If the compositions of the two populations were identical, the index would have a value of zero. Conversely, if the compositions of the two populations were completely dissimilar, the index would have a value of 100.[3]

The index confirms that Job Corps center staff are quite closely matched with their students by gender but less closely matched by race/ethnicity (Table VII.6). Both female students and female staff make up less than half their respective populations, and the overall index of dissimilarity is only

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[3] The index of dissimilarity is $.5 \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^{n} \left| Pstudents_{jk} - Pstaff_{jk} \right|$.

where:

k = 1...n centers
$Pstudents_{jk}$ = proportion of students at center k with attribute j (for example, female)
$Pstaff_{jk}$ = proportion of staff at center with attribute j (for example, female)
k = 1 ... n centers
j = 1 ... j attributes

TABLE VII.6

COMPARISON OF STAFF AND STUDENT COMPOSITION
(Mean Dissimilarity Index)

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Gender	12	16	11	10
Race	27	27	26	28
Gender and Race	32	34	32	32

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

12. CCCs have a slightly higher index of dissimilarity (16).[4] The index for racial dissimilarity is much higher than for gender dissimilarity. Overall, it is about 27 consistently across center types.[5] If both gender and race are compared simultaneously, the index of dissimilarity is uniformly higher. Overall, the mean index value is 32. The patterns by center type and region follow those for race.

Table VII.7 shows the gender and ethnic composition of center staff by position. Most management staff and vocational instructors (about 60 percent or more) are males, and slightly over one-half (54 percent) of RAs are male. In contrast, most academic instructors and counselors are women. Differences in racial composition by position are also considerable. About two-thirds of the instructors (vocational and academic), about half the management staff and counselors, and just one-third of the RAs are white.

B. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Centers are responsible for maintaining safety and security and for ensuring that local laws are obeyed. Levels of security vary, depending on the type of center and the nature of the surrounding community. Private contractors must employ an adequate number of trained security and law enforcement personnel; CCCs may rely on agency personnel to manage center security.

1. Facilities and Security Staffing

Two basic elements define a center's approach to security: (1) whether the facility is secured or unsecured, and (2) the primary role of security staff. Over one-half (58 percent) of all centers are

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[4] There is also some regional variation among contract centers in this index for gender, ranging from a low of 5 to 6 percent in Regions 1, 2, and 9 to a high of 17 percent in Region 4. (See Appendix Table B.26.)

[5] Racial dissimilarity is also more prevalent in some regions than in others (Appendix Table B.26). At the two extremes, the index is only 12 for contract centers in Region 4 but as large as 42 for CCCs in Region 2.

TABLE VII.7

GENDER AND RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF CENTER STAFF, BY POSITION TYPE

	Male	White
All Staff	59	39
Senior Management	63	54
Other Management	59	50
Vocational Instructors	64	69
Academic Instructors	42	63
Counselors	46	50
Residential Advisors	54	36
Other Staff	47	52

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

secured facilities, meaning that persons may enter and leave the center only through secured doors or gates (Table VII.8). High walls or fences physically separate the center from the surrounding community. Most CCCs are unsecured facilities, since they are located in rural areas. In contrast, about three-fourths of contract centers are secured facilities, since they are located mainly in urban areas.

The use of private security guards is common, but not universal. The large majority of CCCs (93 percent) operate without designated security staff, relying instead on the law enforcement staffs of government agencies, such as National Park Service or Forest Service rangers who patrol the federal land on which the CCC is located. In contrast, nearly all private centers have security guards. Security staff perform a variety of functions, including interceding in student disputes and fights, responding to emergencies, writing up incident reports on students, investigating serious violations of center rules, screening (sometimes searching) new students and students returning to center for contraband, keeping out trespassers, protecting students from threats or dangers from outside the center, and patrolling the adjacent neighborhoods.

Among those centers with security staff, less than one-half are more traditional in their view of security, focusing on the physical security of the center and on law enforcement. However, at over one-half the centers with security staff, center directors said these staff had an integral role in the overall discipline system. These centers expect security staff to work with students to change negative behavior and to intervene to prevent minor problems from escalating.

Observations during our center visits confirmed that centers emphasize differing roles for security staff. At some centers, security staff were highly visible, actively patrolling the center, supervising recreational and meal times, and performing dorm inspections. At others, the security staff's functions were limited to securing the perimeter of the center and responding to serious

TABLE VII.8

CENTER APPROACHES TO PROVIDE SECURITY
(Percentage of Centers)

	Center Type			
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Whether Secured Facility	58	17	72	77
Role of Security Staff Is Primarily				
To physically secure center	31	7	41	39
To enforce student discipline	42	0	57	58
No security staff	27	93	2	4

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

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incidents. As one security manager described his staff's activities, "We intercede only when we are asked [by the center staff]."

Interviews with security directors also confirmed that many perceive their role as different from traditional surveillance and policing. For example, at some less traditional sites, security personnel do not wear uniforms. Moreover, security managers indicate that their staff will first talk to a student about a rule infraction and try to change the behavior, instead of automatically writing up and reporting the infraction. Several mentioned that they see security staff functioning as counselors and role models, not solely as disciplinarians.

2. General Perceptions of Center Safety/Security

There are two primary sources of information on the general level of safety and security at Job Corps centers. The first includes information obtained during the site visits, either from staff interviews or focus group meetings with students and staff. The second is the student satisfaction survey that centers administer to all active students each quarter. Next, we provide information on the perceived level of general safety/security at the time of the study based on these two data sources.

Most staff and students believe centers are safe. Very few staff during the interviews and focus group meetings said they were concerned for their personal safety on center. Residential staff reported that some students from racially homogeneous communities initially feel unsafe on center because they are in an unfamiliar environment and have to interact with students from different backgrounds. Indeed, this adjustment to a diverse community is a major obstacle for many new students.

Residential and security staff in urban centers said the surrounding neighborhoods are unsafe or are a dangerous influence on students, particularly in terms of drugs and gangs. Residential staff at about a third of the centers visited recommended some additional enhancements to security, such as improved control of the perimeter, external locks on dormitories, and a greater security presence on center. Security managers, however, reported being largely satisfied with the security systems in place.

Students also generally perceive that centers are safe places. During the focus group meetings, very few students raised concerns about personal safety on center. Moreover, based on data from the June 1996 student satisfaction survey (Table VII.9), most students (84 percent) surveyed agreed with the statement "I feel safe and secure on center" by responding "very true" or "somewhat true." A slightly higher percentage (87 percent) agreed with the statement "Staff care about my safety." Moreover, few students (5 percent) reported that they were personally involved in a fight on center in the last month, although 13 percent reported that someone had threatened to beat them up during the last month. Students in significantly nonresidential centers and at CCCs were slightly more likely to feel safe than students at primarily residential centers. Although not shown on the table, student reports of overall safety vary by region, with 91 percent of students in Region 10 reporting that they feel safe and secure, compared to only 73 percent in Region 5.

3. Negative Incident Reports and Changes Since Zero Tolerance (ZT)

In this section, we provide information on the reported occurrence of negative incidents, including theft, robbery, property destruction, gang activity, fighting, arrests, weapon possession, assault, sexual assault, threat of assault, and drug and alcohol possession and use. In addition to information from the site visits and the student satisfaction survey, centers also provided information on the number of negative incident reports filed during October 1994 and October 1995. This covers a one-year period around the introduction in March 1995 of the ZT policy for drugs and violence and the one-strike-and-you're-out policy. Thus, by comparing data for a period before and after the change in the policy, we can compare the level of safety before and after and obtain a rough

TABLE VII.9

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY, BY CENTER TYPE
(Percentage of Students That Agree with Statement)

	Center Type			
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
I feel safe and secure on center	84	88	82	90
Staff care about my safety	87	88	86	90
I have been involved in a physical fight on center in the last month	5	7	5	3
Someone on center threatened to beat me up in the last month	13	15	14	8

SOURCE: Quarterly Job Corps Student Satisfaction Survey, June 1996.

indication of the effect of the policy change. As summarized below, consistent with the general perceptions provided to us by students and staff, it appears that the ZT policy has been quite effective in improving center safety and security.

Table VII.10 shows the mean number of negative incident reports filed by offense category in October 1994 and October 1995. As shown in the first row of the table, the mean number of theft incident reports declined from 1.53 in October 1994 to 0.96 in October 1995. Yet many students and residential staff indicated to us during the site visits that they perceive theft on center to be a widespread problem. RAs at almost two-thirds of the study sites visited indicated that petty theft in dorms is an ongoing problem and a source of conflict among students. Although students have access to locked storage space, they do not always take the precaution of securing their possessions.

Reported incidents of robbery and property destruction also appear to have declined since the introduction of the ZT policy. Specifically, the mean number of negative incident reports for property destruction declined by nearly one-half, while the mean number of robbery incidents declined to one-fifth its level a year earlier.

The introduction of ZT is also probably at least partly responsible for the reduction in gang activity. The average number of negative incident reports related to gang activity declined from 0.82 in October 1994 to .38 in October 1995. However, during our site visits, security managers at over one-third of the sites visited voiced concern about ongoing gang activity. Several also mentioned that gangs had been a problem in the past or are considered a potential problem requiring constant staff vigilance. Even at rural centers, security staff had encountered recent gang activity on center and stressed the need to stay abreast of gang developments in the communities from which students are recruited.

TABLE VII.10

NUMBER OF NEGATIVE INCIDENT REPORTS, BY CATEGORY
(Mean Monthly Number of Reports by Center Type)

	Center Type							
	Overall		CCC		Primarily Residential		Significantly Nonresidential	
	October		October		October		October	
Incident Category	1994	1995	1994	1995	1994	1995	1994	1995
Theft	1.53	0.96	1.69	0.56	2.04	1.48	0.40	0.38
Robbery	0.19	0.04	0.67	0.07	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00
Property Destruction	0.99	0.58	1.07	0.57	1.33	0.70	0.28	0.35
Gang Activity	0.82	0.38	0.74	0.36	1.17	0.42	0.24	0.31
Fighting	3.24	1.82	2.40	1.21	4.43	2.66	1.88	0.85
Arrest	0.50	0.68	0.48	0.46	0.67	0.88	0.20	0.54
Weapon Possession	0.45	0.37	0.52	0.21	0.55	0.56	0.20	0.15
Assault	1.92	1.91	1.81	1.46	2.48	2.57	1.00	1.12
Sexual Assault	0.15	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.10	0.40	0.38
Threat of Assault	1.20	1.16	1.04	0.64	1.85	1.72	0.20	0.65
Drug Use	1.90	2.65	2.15	1.36	1.80	2.68	1.80	4.00
Drug Possession	1.10	0.66	0.86	0.25	1.40	1.00	0.84	0.46

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

During the site visits, staff also discussed some of the measures that have been taken to address an actual or potential problem of gang activity. These measures include:

- Forbidding any display of gang affiliation (dress, handshakes, etc.) and enforcing sanctions against such display
- Requiring students to sign a contract not to participate in a gang while on center
- Developing close relationships with local law enforcement in order to be better informed about gang activity that might spill on to the center

Another key issue is violence on center. The mean number of incident reports for fighting declined significantly from 3.24 to 1.82 from October 1994 to October 1995. Over the same period, the number of incident reports for arrests actually increased slightly. This increase in arrests likely represents a more strict interpretation of the ZT policies.

Our discussions with center staff did not reveal any major issues with violence. Specifically, none of the study sites perceived violence on center to be an issue since the enactment of ZT policies. However, sites clearly have different thresholds for defining violence. For example, staff at one rural center could not recall the last time they had experienced a violent assault. Another center had experienced five serious incidents in the previous three months, but still did not consider these incidents to constitute a problem.

Centers reported an average of about two assaults per month, which remained fairly constant after the introduction of the ZT policy. However, about one incident report was filed monthly for the threat of assault. Information from the student survey generally confirms that assaults and threats of assault are rare. There were virtually no reported incidents of sexual assault during the sample months before or after enactment of ZT.

Sexual misconduct (not shown) is not a compelling concern for centers: only about one-fourth of security managers cited prohibited sexual activity as a problem for the center. A similar percentage of RAs expressed concerns on the topic. Most centers deal with student sexual behavior as an education and social development issue to be addressed through counseling and social skills training (SST), and only a few centers mentioned any security measures taken to address the problem.

Changes in negative incident reports related to possession and use of alcohol and drugs were mixed. The number of such reports for drug and alcohol possession declined from 1.1 in October 1994 to 0.66 in October 1995, but the number for drug and alcohol use increased somewhat (from 1.90 to 2.65). The higher number of negative incident reports for drug and alcohol use may reflect the increased reporting of such infractions, a result of increased drug testing in this period.

While ZT is widely acknowledged to have been effective in curtailing drug and alcohol use on center, over one-half the centers visited indicated that they still experience problems with student consumption of alcohol and drugs. Of this group, however, several qualified their assessment of the problem, indicating that although the problem exists, it is not "serious." Others characterized the problem as stemming primarily from off-center use, particularly of alcohol. This is consistent with the greater problem at significantly nonresidential centers. More remote centers typically reported an easier time controlling alcohol consumption because of lack of student access to liquor stores. Three sites indicated that they allowed students over 21 to consume alcohol off campus. Some of the measures centers have taken to address problems with drug and alcohol use include searches for contraband when students return to center; breath tests administered to students who appeared to have been drinking; individual counseling on substance abuse; and contact with local liquor store owners to discourage sales to students.

VIII. PLACEMENT SERVICES

Placement completes the Job Corps model of providing comprehensive services to disadvantaged young men and women. These services are designed to help Job Corps students obtain and maintain employment--preferably in their chosen vocation--that will lead to economic self-sufficiency and enhance their own, as well as their families', well-being. To assist students in the transition from Job Corps to gainful employment in their communities, Job Corps provides two sets of placement services. The first is designed to assist students either in obtaining a job that will lead to advancement or in pursuing additional education and training to meet the entry requirements for higher-skilled jobs. The second set of services is designed to help students make the transition into a community by assisting them in relocation efforts and referring them to community support services.

To focus its placement services on the types of employment or additional education/training that will help ensure the economic self-sufficiency of its students, Job Corps has adopted a set of criteria for determining what constitutes a successful placement--specifically, a student's entry into at least one of the following:

- Paid employment of at least 20 hours per week, with 32 hours or more constituting a full-time job placement
- An approved apprenticeship training program
- Active duty in the armed forces
- A full-time education or training program, defined as 20 hours per week for high school or vocational educational programs and 9 credit hours for college
- A combination of paid employment and college, with 16 hours of employment and 6 hours of college constituting full-time placement and 10 hours of employment and 6 hours of college constituting part-time placement

Although these criteria allow for both full-time and part-time placements, they require former students to be engaged in productive activities on more than a half-time basis and limit part-time jobs or part-time education and training programs as valid placements. In addition, as described in Chapter IX, Job Corps emphasizes the importance of full-time placement and of placement in jobs that are related to students' chosen vocation by including both outcomes as measures. Although a training-related placement--referred to as a job-training match--is not required, this type of placement plays an important role in assessment of specific vocational areas offered in Job Corps, as well as of the program's overall performance.

This chapter describes the organization and provision of Job Corps' placement services. The first section provides an overview of the delivery of these services and the organizations that assist students in obtaining a job and establishing themselves in the community. This is followed by a discussion of the services available to students to help them find and obtain gainful employment. The third section discusses the second set of placement services and the roles of the national support contractors who provide the services to help former Job Corps students make the transition into their chosen communities. The final section highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the Job Corps placement services and presents several of the main lessons learned from our study of this component of the Job Corps model.

Before describing Job Corps' placement services, we must emphasize the limited nature of the information available for the process analysis. The findings presented in this chapter are derived principally from telephone interviews with management staff from the organizations that provide placement services to students who attended one of the 23 centers selected for our in-depth site visits. As described in Appendix A, a placement agency was selected for each of the 23 centers we visited, and we interviewed the person who was most knowledgeable about the placement services provided to students attending the linked center. Information regarding the provision of placement services designed to help students make the transition from center life back to their communities was obtained during our site visits to Job Corps regional offices from representatives of the organizations providing these services. Overall, the findings discussed here are based on a limited set of data and do not allow for the same degree of comprehensive examination that was possible for OA activities and center operations. As such, the findings presented in this chapter should be interpreted as a general overview of Job Corps placement activities.

A. ORGANIZATION OF PLACEMENT SERVICES

Three types of organizations provide placement services for Job Corps students: Job Corps centers, placement contractors, and national support services contractors. Job Corps centers provide both types of placement services for students while they are still enrolled in the program and attending a center. Post-termination placement services are provided primarily by placement contractors and national support services contractors. However, centers often continue to provide assistance to former students after they terminate from the program through informal contact between center staff and former students.

In addition to providing students the vocational, academic, and social skills necessary to succeed in the labor market, Job Corps centers have historically played a role in helping students get a job once they leave the program. As described below, centers help prepare students to look for a job and either return to their home community or move to a new one. While centers have a long history of providing these types of services, they have recently begun to play a much larger role in helping secure jobs for former students. Because of changes in the performance measurement system, centers are taking a heightened interest in the placement of students once they leave the center. Over the past several years, the measures used to judge how well a center is operating have shifted toward placement outcomes and away from students' in-program experiences.

Today, a variety of center staff help prepare students to find a job and make a smooth transition into a community, whereas up until several years ago, only a few center staff were involved in providing placement assistance. Traditionally, the exit World of Work instructor and the Work Experience Program (WEP) coordinator (if the center had this position) were the main providers of placement services, although vocational instructors in some centers also assisted. However, the recent emphasis on placement in the outcome measurement system has caused many centers to incorporate placement outcomes in the evaluation of all vocational instructors and other center staff. As a result, a much broader range of center staff are focusing on helping students find and maintain jobs.

Placement contractors are assigned the primary responsibility for providing job placement services to former Job Corps students. As described in Chapter II, there are three major categories of placement contractors: (1) Job Corps centers that hold separately awarded competitive contracts, (2) other private organizations, and (3) State Employment Services Agencies (SESAs) or other state agencies. These contractors provide a broad range of services to assist students in obtaining a job and shoulder the responsibility for verifying that a student's employment and educational activities meet the criteria that determine a valid placement. Placement contractors must provide these services to all former Job Corps students, regardless of the amount of time they were enrolled in the program or whether they completed any aspect of the program, for a period of six months from the date students terminate their enrollment at a center.[1]

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[1] Placement contractors are not required to provide assistance to students who were terminated for violating the expanded zero-tolerance policy or to students with fraudulent enrollments (students
(continued...)

Job Corps placement contracts are awarded to provide placement services to former students residing in specified geographic areas, which in general encompass an entire state. However, several placement contracts are awarded to provide placement services in smaller geographic areas (such as a metropolitan area), and a small number cover multistate areas. For example, virtually all the placement contracts held by SESAs or other state agencies cover an entire state, while most of the placement contracts awarded to a Job Corps center cover smaller geographic regions. In contrast, the contracts held by other private organizations include contracts that encompass small geographic areas through multistate areas for an entire Job Corps region.

This geographic basis for awarding placement contracts leads to different types of contractors with different operational practices. Contractors who serve students living in a single metropolitan area generally do so from a single office with a very small number of staff. For example, the center-affiliated contractors included in our linked sample of placement contractors typically had fewer than 10 staff and between one and four office locations. Further, the placement activities of these center-based contractors were often run from an office at the center, with the same staff providing both on-center placement services to students while they are enrolled and post-termination placement assistance to students who live in the geographic area covered by the contract. Moreover, these contracts are usually managed by an on-center manager who oversees all placement services at the center and often provides placement services.

In contrast to the generally localized activities of center-affiliated placement contractors, contractors that provide services to former students over an entire state typically have multiple offices located throughout that state. For instance, one of the managers of a contract held by a SESA

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[1](...continued)
who were determined to be ineligible for the program after enrollment).

reported that the agency had 36 offices throughout the state. These contractors also generally have a central administrative office that oversees all operations and contract managers who rarely provide services to former students. In addition, placement staff employed by SESAs or other state agencies often have responsibilities other than providing services to former Job Corps students. Staff working for other private placement contractors can focus all their attention on Job Corps activities.[2] However, staff employed by SESAs or other state agencies also provide services to a broad range of clients and these agencies rarely have staff devoted exclusively to the provision of services to Job Corps students.

The third type of placement service providers are two national support services contractors who hold sole-source contracts with the National Office of Job Corps to provide support services to former Job Corps students. Specifically, two nonprofit organizations, Women in Community Service (WICS) and Joint Action in Community Service (JACS), provide both pre-termination and post-termination support. The services WICS and JACS provide are designed to help students make a smooth transition into the communities where they are going after they leave Job Corps and to facilitate their abilities to obtain and maintain a job. While students are still enrolled in Job Corps, these organizations provide information about the communities students have chosen to locate in and the types of social services available in these communities. After students have left the center, WICS and JACS attempt to contact them to determine the support services they need to be able to succeed in the labor market and to refer them to community service providers.

Although these support services contracts are awarded at a national level, services of both WICS and JACS are separated along the same geographic divisions as the Job Corps regional offices. Both of these community service organizations have staff at each of the regional offices, as well as a large number of volunteers in communities throughout the nation. The WICS and JACS staff located in the regional offices primarily refer former students to local service providers and, when appropriate, will have a local representative contact the student to provide additional assistance.

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[2] Although many of these placement contractors also hold OA contracts, only a small number have the same staff perform both OA and placement functions. In most of these situations, the OA and placement functions are performed by separate staff under a common management structure.

This organizational structure for the provision of placement services results in students receiving placement assistance from several different entities. First, students receive assistance from the Job Corps center they attend. They are then assigned to a placement contractor based on the location of the community they have chosen to live in upon leaving the center, most likely a different organization that will be serving former students of a number of different Job Corps centers. If, within the six-month period in which services must be offered, a student relocates outside the geographic area covered by the original contractor, a new placement contractor is assigned. Finally, female students may receive referrals to support services and other assistance from a WICS representative, and male students may receive similar assistance from a JACS representative located in the regional office or possibly in their communities.

Another key feature of this organizational structure for the delivery of placement services relates to the geographic location of students relative to the organizations providing the services. Clearly, while students are enrolled, they are living very close to or even at the service provider. However, unless students decide to locate near the center they attended, they may be quite a distance from the center staff who would be assisting them in trying to find a job and move into their communities. Moreover, the large geographic areas covered by most placement contractors may also result in students being geographically quite distant from the assigned placement specialist. As a result, once students leave a center, they will most likely never have face-to-face contact with placement staff.

B. JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES

Services designed to help students obtain and maintain gainful employment are provided by both Job Corps centers and placement contractors. This section describes such services, first with an overview of the services provided by centers, and then with a discussion of those provided by placement contractors.

1. Center-Provided Job Placement Services

Centers conduct a number of activities to prepare students for leaving the center and entering the labor market. The vast majority of these activities are focused on developing general employability skills and preparing for job interviews. For example, the exit part of the World of Work component in the educational program assists students in preparing a resume. In addition, to prepare students for the labor market, centers instruct them in how to prepare for and act in a job interview.

At some centers, placement activities begin several months before students are expected to complete the program, while in others the center's placement efforts are concentrated in the last few weeks of students' enrollments. For example, some centers begin preparing students for the labor market long before they are expected to complete the program by using the (P/PEP) process to mimic job interviews. Specifically, as students are about halfway toward completing their vocational program, the center begins to treat the P/PEP as a mock job interview. Students are expected to wear clothes appropriate for a job interview, and the counselor leading the session treats the student as a job applicant. In these centers, the P/PEP is treated more and more like a job interview as the student nears completion of the program. WEP placements also serve the important function of preparing students for the labor market. All centers use the exit phase of World of Work during a student's last few days on center to focus the student on getting a job.

As noted above, centers are becoming more focused on the placements of their students as the outcome measurement system places more emphasis on job placement and wage measures. Part of this heightened attention has taken the form of centers working to provide direct job placements for students. For instance, centers are increasingly asking their vocational instructors to assist in placing students in jobs through their contacts with business and labor organizations. Moreover, Job Corps' recent emphasis on School-to-Work transitions also attempts to develop permanent jobs for students after they complete the program.

The final role of centers in providing placement assistance for their students involves interaction with placement contractors. As they terminate from the program, students are informed how to contact the placement agency that has been assigned to them. In addition, the center also provides information about the student to the placement contractor through paper forms and, at times, personal contact between vocational instructors and placement specialists. Finally, the center informs students that they must obtain their last readjustment check and any final bonus checks from the placement agency.

2. Contractor-Provided Job Placement Services

Placement contractors also provide services to students both while they are enrolled in the program and after they leave a center. There is a great deal of overlap in the activities of centers and placement contractors in the provision of services to help prepare students to obtain a job, particularly while students are still enrolled at a center. Moreover, the lines where a center's role in placement ends and where the placement contractors role begins are very ambiguous among the centers that also hold a placement contract.

While it is unclear whether the provision of placement services to students prior to their termination is part of the center's activities or the placement contractor's activities in the centers that hold a placement contract, most placement contractors not affiliated with a center also provide some form of placement services to students while they are enrolled in the program. All the placement managers interviewed, regardless of their affiliation with a center, believed that it was beneficial to begin emphasizing the importance of placement to students as early as possible. For example, in the words of a manager from a private placement contractor: "We make ourselves and the idea of placement as visible and accessible as possible from day one.... Placement is as much a part of the program as academic and vocational classes."

Despite this universal opinion of placement contract managers, there is substantial variation in the extent to which they provide pre-termination services to students. At one end of the spectrum are placement contractors who assign a staff member to be located at the center. For example, while it is more common for center-affiliated placement contractors to have staff at the center, a number of contractors not affiliated with a center set up an on-center office for staff responsible for assisting students who locate in the surrounding area. At the other end of the spectrum are a minority of placement contractors that rarely or never send staff even to visit a center, much less provide pre-termination services to students. In these cases, the only contact the placement contractor has with students prior to their termination is through a letter that provides the student with the address and telephone number of the office of the placement contractor nearest to where the student will be living.

On-center placement contractors that provide services to students prior to their termination focus on three placement-related activities:

1. Making students aware of the placement services available to them after they leave the program
2. Pre-employment counseling
3. Job search assistance

The first activity begins during the orientation program, with the placement staff describing the range of placement services available to students. The other two on-center services placement contractors provide to enrolled students occur during the weeks immediately before students terminate from the center. The involvement of placement staff in these activities was much higher if the placement contractor also operated the center. For example, when the same contractor was used for center operations and placement services, the contractor's center and placement staff often coordinated the exit World of Work phase. Moreover, in these instances, placement staff were also more likely to assist the center's WEP coordinator in finding work experience sites for students because of their knowledge and contacts with local employers. Overall, on-center placement contractor activity served more as an important bridge to post-termination services than as a "placement service" in its own right.

Placement contractors' primary responsibilities for providing services to students begins upon termination from a center. Placement contractors are required to provide all former Job Corps students with a broad range of post-termination services, including:

- Locating recent terminees and notifying them of the available placement services they are entitled to receive
- Providing job search assistance services, such as help in developing interviewing skills, instruction in locating and using job information sources, help preparing a resume, and maintaining a job bank
- Providing former students with assistance in job development and with direct job referrals
- Assisting former students with enrolling in further education or training programs or with enlisting in the military
- Verifying placements and submitting placement data to the Job Corps Data Center

Up until the past few years, placement contractors had to provide these services to former students only until they were placed in a job, school, or the military or for six months after termination from a center. A policy change that went into effect in program year (FY) 1996 now requires contractors to provide the full range of services to former students throughout the entire six-month period, regardless of when students were initially placed.

The first post-termination activity of placement contractors involves locating former students and informing them about the placement services they are entitled to receive. Although the center informs the students prior to their termination of the name, address, and telephone number of the placement contractor, and although the placement contractor may have had some contact with students while they were at a center, locating former students requires substantial effort. Although Job Corps policies provide former students with incentives to contact their assigned placement contractor, managers estimated that less than one out of four former students contact the contractor.[3] Hence, placement staff must locate and initiate contact with the great majority of former students.

To help the placement contractor locate former students, centers request information from terminating students regarding how to contact them, and the centers provide this information to the placement contractor within a few days after students terminate. Despite the best efforts of the centers to obtain reliable and up-to-date contact information, most of the managers we interviewed mentioned the poor quality of this information. Although the placement contract managers recognized that former students are a highly mobile population, a number of them suggested that, in addition to asking students for contact information, centers should also obtain updated information for relatives or friends of students who would know how to reach them. Recently, in response to inclusion of a post-placement follow-up measure in the outcomes measurement system, centers are becoming more actively involved in obtaining student contact information and in helping track students.

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[3] To provide an incentive to former students, Job Corps requires them to obtain their last readjustment check from their assigned placement contractor. To receive their final check, students must contact the placement contractor and provide them with current contact information. Moreover, as an added incentive, students can also receive a bonus payment through the contractor by obtaining and reporting a training-related placement.

Overall, placement managers estimated that one-half to three-fourths of placement specialists' time is devoted solely to locating students and keeping in contact with them over the six-month placement period. Placement contractors rely almost exclusively on telephone calls and letters mailed to students' last known address. Very few students are contacted in person, and almost all interaction between students and placement specialists is over the telephone. The extensive amount of time required just to initiate and maintain contact with former students, as well as the heavy reliance on telephone interactions, clearly limits the ability of contractors to provide in-depth placement services.

Within the limited time available, and constrained by their reliance on telephone interactions with students, placement contractors make available a variety of placement services. Table VIII.1 shows the types of services that are offered by the 19 contractors we interviewed and the managers' perceptions about the extent to which former students use each type of service. The first column in the table lists the types of placement services contractors offer, and the second column shows the number of placement contractors that offer each type of service. The last set of columns present the number of managers who reported that the corresponding service was provided to all students, to most students, to about one-half of the students, and to only a few students.

The results in Table VIII.1 indicate that all 19 of the contractors interviewed provided former students with job search skills, interview skills, and direct job referrals. Almost all offer some type of career counseling, assistance in enrolling in further education or training programs or enlistment

TABLE VIII.1

SUMMARY OF POST-TERMINATION SERVICES OFFERED BY PLACEMENT CONTRACTORS

Placement Services	Number Who Offer Service	Number Reporting Portion of Students Using Service			
		All	Most	About Half	A Few
Job Search Assistance	19	4	5	5	5
Interview Skills	19	3	6	5	5
Direct Job Referral	19	2	6	6	4
Career Counseling	18	5	4	3	5
Assistance in Training/College Enrollment	18	0	2	4	11
Resume-Writing Assistance	18	2	3	3	10
Job Club/Job Bank	15	4	1	5	5
Support Services	13	0	0	1	12
Aptitude/Skills Assessment	8	3	1	0	4

SOURCE: Interviews with placement contractors linked with centers at which site visits were conducted.

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in the military, and assistance in preparing a resume. Most of the contractors provided a job bank for former students and referrals to other support services. Very few provided aptitude and skills assessments.

Placement managers reported job search assistance to be among the most widely used services agencies offer. These services involved primarily talking with former students over the telephone about ways of locating and using common sources of job listings, such as newspaper classified ads, SESAs, and corporate job information sources. In the vast majority of placement operations, this assistance was informal and was incorporated into conversations between placement specialists and students. However, in a few instances, managers reported providing students with pamphlets or other informational materials to use on their own.

Another service that managers reported most or all students received involves job interviewing skills. Over half the managers we interviewed gave this service particular emphasis. Usually, the placement specialist provided students with information on how to dress, how to present their training and skills, and how to interact appropriately with the interviewer. In addition, most contractors emphasized the use of practice or "mock" interviews as an important strategy for developing student skills in this area. However, these mock interviews were almost always conducted over the phone. Another instructional tool, which is used by a small number of the contractors we interviewed, involved contacting employers students had already interviewed with and providing feedback from these employers to students as a training device.

Direct job development and placement is the other primary service that placement agencies are contracted to provide and, as shown in Table VIII.1, all the managers we interviewed indicated that they provided this service. Managers reported that placement specialists identify existing job openings, match student qualifications to the job requirements, and then refer students for an interview. While placement specialists used a range of job development strategies, including newspaper ads, employer announcements, and job databases, direct contact with employers where students had been placed in the past was identified as the most productive strategy.

Most of the managers we interviewed identified job development efforts as the most important component of the services they provide to former students, and almost all placement contractors devoted at least some resources to direct referral services. However, managers reported that their staff is unable to devote enough time to this activity and that more effort on direct job development would benefit students who might otherwise not obtain a job that best matches the skills and competencies they gained from Job Corps. For example, after spending up to three-fourths of their time locating and checking in with students, placement specialists were reported not to have adequate time to develop good relations with employers, which managers identified as key to affecting positive placements.

All but one of the placement managers we interviewed reported providing career counseling designed to clarify the student's career and employment goals and providing information for developing a realistic placement goal. Examples of counseling activities included exploring current employment options, reviewing any additional training and educational options (especially with younger students), providing specific labor market information (occupational pay scales), and providing information about requirements for entering the military. As with the other placement services, placement specialists used primarily informal counseling methods in telephone conversations with former students.

The remaining services--assistance in enrolling in further school/training or enlisting in the armed forces, resume preparation, job bank, support services, and aptitude/skills assessments--are frequently offered, but used only sporadically at best. For example, managers noted that students had already received substantial assistance in the first two services before termination, because the center provided them this assistance. Although most placement offices maintain an internal job bank that includes job listings and other job reference materials, students rarely visit the placement office to use this resource. Placement contractors also mentioned that they play a minor role in providing other support services to former students.

As noted above, placement contractors are now responsible for students not just until they are initially placed but for the entire six-month period after their termination date. After their initial placements, students may still require assistance from contractors to remain on the job or locate another placement if the first one does not prove satisfactory. In order to stay informed about recently placed students, all contractors implemented some kind of followup during the first weeks or months after initial placement. The nature and extent of these follow-up activities varied considerably across contractors. For example, several contractors called each student regularly (at least once a month) for up to six months, while others relied on follow-up contact with employers to track students' success on the job. Still others had no personal contact with the student after placement, relying solely on either a follow-up form letter or the local JACS or WICS representatives to establish contact with students who might need additional services.

The discussion above presents a picture of Job Corps' post-termination placement services from the perspective of our sample of 19 placement contractor managers. To obtain a different--and more representative--perspective on these placement services, we also examined the placement experiences of terminees during calendar year 1996. Table VIII.2 summarizes the placement experiences of these former Job Corps students. The table categorizes placement agencies into three groups--SESAs or other state agencies, placement contractors affiliated with a Job Corps center, and other private placement contractors--and presents results overall and for each of these three groups.

TABLE VIII.2

SUMMARY OF STUDENT PLACEMENT EXPERIENCES
(Calendar Year 1996 Terminees)

	Overall	SESAs	Center Affiliated	Other Private Contractor
Percentage of Students Assigned	100	12	32	56
Percentage of Students Assigned Who Are Placed	82	74	85	81
Percentage of Students Placed Who Are Self-Placed	48	39	47	50

SOURCE: SPAMIS.

The specific measures examined in the table are the percentage of terminees assigned to each contractor type; the percentage of these terminees placed in a job, school, or the military; and among those placed, the percentage who are reported by the placement contractor as being self-placed.[4]

The findings reported in the first row of Table VIII.2 illustrate some of the differences mentioned above in the size of the different categories of placement agencies. Specifically, although center-affiliated placement contractors hold 45 percent of the placement contracts (Table II.3), these agencies are rather small and are assigned only 32 percent of students for placement purposes. On the other hand, other private placement contractors are assigned 56 percent of the students but hold only 41 percent of the placement contracts. As noted above, these agencies generally have more staff and multiple offices spread over a large geographic area.

Comparing the results in the last two rows suggests that, while almost four out of five students are placed in a job, school, or the military, a substantial number of these placements are not the direct result of placement contractors' efforts. Overall, almost half of all reported placements are recorded as self-placements; that is, the student found the placement without help from the contractor. Clearly, the reports of self-placements are not likely to be very reliable; while placement contractors are not formally assessed on the percentage of self-placements, it is not in their interest to report higher self-placements than actually occur. For example, the reported self-placement rate among SESA placement contractors dropped from 54 percent in calendar year 1995 to the 39 percent reported in Table VIII.2, suggesting that the reporting in this area is at the discretion of the placement contractor. Although the reliability of the reported self-placement data is questionable, these results reinforce the perceptions of the contractor managers that placement staff expend most of their efforts in locating students and completing paperwork rather than assisting students in securing a placement.

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[4] A placement contractor reports a student as self-placed if, in the opinion of the contractor, the student obtained the placement without the assistance of the contractor.

C. OTHER PLACEMENT SERVICES

Although Job Corps centers also provide services to ease students' transition back into their communities or into new communities, the primary responsibility for these services is assigned to the two national support services contractors, WICS and JACS. These contractors use a corps of community volunteers who act as general counselors to deliver local support services. WICS, which serves female students, and JACS, which serves male students, provide both pre-termination and post-termination support services to students. These services are designed to help students make the transition into the communities where they are going after they leave Job Corps and to help them obtain and maintain a job.

Centers provide exiting students with information about the general support services in their communities, including the services available through WICS and JACS and, if available, the names of the WICS or JACS volunteers available to assist them. Whenever possible, they try to get the students in contact with the assigned WICS or JACS volunteer before termination. Centers also provide referrals to other community service organizations in the areas students are going to, and many centers will continue to provide informal help to former students who contact the center to ask for assistance or referrals to other service providers.

WICS and JACS attempt to telephone students within a few days after they have arrived in the local area and to ask whether they would like to speak to a volunteer. These two organizations provide information about the communities students have chosen to locate in and the types of social services that are available. In addition, the WICS and JACS staff or volunteers will assess students' needs for post-termination support services, provide counseling services, provide referrals to appropriate community service providers, assist in preventing early termination, and follow up on students who have left the center without authorization.

The JACS and WICS counselors also provide former students with information about placement bonuses and refer them to the local placement agency. Because former students might need immediate help with housing or other social services when they arrive at their destination, they sometimes first come into contact with the JACS or WICS volunteer rather than their assigned placement contractor. For example, several placement contractor managers mentioned linkages with WICS and JACS as important in obtaining updated information on how to contact students. These volunteers are in a position not only to refer students for placement services, but also to encourage them to follow through on placement activities.

WICS and JACS volunteers may provide information or advice on a variety of topics, such as applying for jobs, job leads, housing, transportation, shopping, budgeting, and general adjustment to the community and to the world of work. These organizations do not directly engage in placement activities, but they do offer important transitional and ancillary support to placement activities of centers and placement contractors.

Although centers, placement contractors, and the two national support service contractors are all involved in providing overlapping post-termination services to former Job Corps students, it appears that there is little communication or coordination between these organizations. For example, in our discussions with placement contractor managers, student support services was one of the areas identified for improvement, and the managers had little knowledge of the specific services WICS and JACS provide. Several placement managers indicated that to ensure the job readiness of youth, Job Corps needed to provide additional transitional support services to address the barriers they face after leaving a center. Transportation assistance was considered to be by far the most important support service needed. Staff representing rural areas were especially concerned with transportation issues, because reliable public transportation was often not available. Other major employment barriers that managers identified as needing increased support and transitional services include lack of child care and affordable housing.

Finally, in addition to the counseling and transition support that JACS gives students before and after termination from Job Corps, for the past few years, JACS staff in Kansas City have been performing post-program data collection. Specifically, beginning in September 1995, JACS has been administering a computer-assisted telephone interviewing operation to collect data from students 13 weeks after they were placed. The purpose of the 13-week follow-up survey is to collect information to verify the initial placement, as well as additional data on students' post-program employment and schooling experiences. In an effort to improve services, the survey obtains information on student satisfaction; it also identifies students who are eligible for--and interested in--receiving additional placement services. The information this survey collected was not available for inclusion in this report, but this source will provide Job Corps with valuable, ongoing information regarding the types of placement services students receive and their satisfaction with them and could identify areas where student needs are not being met.

D. SUMMARY

Two broad findings emerge from our discussions with Job Corps center staff, placement managers, regional WICS and JACS representatives, and regional office staff about the placement services Job Corps provides. First, there is a great deal of overlap in the types of services, and this duplication is increasing as placement outcomes become more important in the performance measurement system. Second, for the most part, the post-termination services that placement contractors offer are limited in scope and substance and often consist of informal, unstructured, or self-help services. Several factors explain these two findings, and the staff we interviewed had several suggestions for improvement.

Centers have historically provided a wide range of job search assistance and career counseling services to students while they are still enrolled at the center, including interviewing skills, resume preparation, instruction in how to fill out employment applications, and methods for locating job openings. All these placement assistance services overlap with the services that contractors reported providing to former students. However, centers have long recognized that they are in a much better position to provide these services while students are still enrolled in the program, because the center can interact with them on a personal basis, whereas placement contractors generally interact with students over the telephone, which clearly limits their ability to provide these services effectively. Recognition of this by placement contractors as well may explain why the managers we interviewed did not stress these activities as the essential elements of the services they provide former students.

The activity identified by placement contract managers as the key service they provide former students, namely direct job placements, is also now being taken on by centers more extensively in response to changes in the outcome measurement system. As described above, centers are now including placement outcomes in performance evaluations of individual staff members, particularly vocational instructors, and this has motivated their staff to become more involved in providing direct placement services. For example, vocational instructors are now devoting more effort to using their linkages with employers and labor organizations, both in the area surrounding the center and in other places where students locate, to help find jobs for their current and former students. These activities directly overlap with the job development services provided by placement contractors, although the efforts of the center staff may supplement rather than substitute for the activities of the placement contractors.

The limited scope and substance of the services of placement contractors can be attributed primarily to three factors. First, the substantial amount of time that managers indicated that their staff spend on finding students to encourage them to take advantage of the services and on performing the required followup greatly limits these services. All the managers we interviewed indicated that staff spent too much time fulfilling the contact requirements of the program, leaving too little time for helping those who could really benefit. In addition, managers also believed that the time spent contacting students might be best used to develop more linkages with employers, which managers viewed as the most effective for placement.

Second, the geographic dispersion of students prevents placement contractors from providing services on a personal basis. While placement contractors tended to have offices in larger cities, when students leave the program, they locate across vast areas, including rural areas and small towns hundreds of miles from the nearest placement office. Clearly, it would be infeasible for placement contractors to provide services to this geographically dispersed population of students except through telephone contact or written communications. For example, one manager estimated that staff dealt exclusively by telephone or mail with more than 60 percent of their assigned students. This geographic separation makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to provide some types of services, and having to communicate by telephone clearly limits the ability of placement staff to provide in-depth services to students.

Finally, the third factor that limits the scope and substance of the services provided by placement contractors relates to the duplication of services. For instance, as noted earlier, centers provide students instruction in job search skills and help them prepare a resume. As a result, although all placement contractors offer these services, they do not focus on them and offer these services only through informal mechanisms, such as in the course of their required contact with students.

Job Corps could improve its placement services in several areas. Two that were widely viewed as important were (1) the integration and coordination of placement services among centers and placement contractors, and (2) the initiation and maintenance of linkages with employers. Better integration and coordination among centers and placement contractors in the types of services they provide would certainly help. For example, clearly articulating and assigning responsibility to centers for instructing students in job search skills and ensuring they have a high-quality resume would allow placement contractors to focus more on job development and direct placement of students. Similarly, more frequent and improved communications between vocational instructors and placement specialists was also identified as an area that could greatly improve placement outcomes for students. Several managers we interviewed suggested that vocational instructors could assist placement staff in not only identifying specific job openings, but also in establishing and maintaining linkages with employers. These managers believe that such linkages would give the placement contractors firsthand knowledge of job openings and make the continual involvement of vocational instructors unnecessary.

Other areas that could be improved through a number of policy changes relate to program requirements regarding contacting and serving all former students, provision of support services, better matches between training offerings and jobs in high-demand occupations, and improved automation of and access to existing electronic job search services. Placement contractor staff spend extensive time locating and contacting students who either do not want assistance in finding a job or who do not have the motivation or skills to get and keep a job. Current policies require placement contractors to serve virtually all students who terminate from the program, including those who participated for a very limited time and who have not received any significant program services. Managers contend that if the time devoted to locating and providing services to these students (who generally either do not want assistance or are not motivated to find a job) could be focused on job development and direct placement efforts to assist program completers or former students who are motivated to work, these students would be much better served and their placement outcomes would greatly improve.

One of the areas cited by the managers of placement contracts as needing additional attention in the Job Corps model was the provision of support services to former students to assist them not only in obtaining a job, but in maintaining employment. The three specific needs identified are transportation, child care, and affordable housing. Although WICS and JACS provide referrals to local community service providers in these areas, managers believed that these providers were currently overwhelmed with requests for assistance. These same support services are also at the forefront of welfare-to-work issues, and it is possible that both Job Corps and local welfare-to-work providers could benefit from coordinating delivery of these support services.

Another area placement managers believe should be more carefully examined is the match between the skills being taught in Job Corps and those needed in the labor market. As described in Chapter IV, there is a potential discordance between some of the vocational offerings in Job Corps and the number of job openings in related occupations. Managers contended that focusing training in the occupational areas that are in high demand could improve the placement outcomes of students. In addition, because of feedback they had received from employers, several managers questioned whether the curricula used in some of the vocational programs were up to current industry standards. Improvements in both of these areas were identified as ways to increase the placement outcomes of students, particularly training-related placements.

Finally, improvements in electronic access to job placement resources was the other major area where placement managers believed Job Corps could enhance their delivery of services. Specifically, providing on-line access in all placement offices to electronic labor market information sources, such as America's Job Bank and other electronic job data banks, was viewed as a useful way for placement specialists to help match former students with job openings.

IX. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Although the legislation authorizing JTPA did not mandate performance standards for Job Corps, over the years the National Office has developed perhaps the most comprehensive performance measurement system (PMS) of any education and training program. Performance standards have been an integral part of the Job Corps center accountability process for over 15 years. More recently, standards were formally incorporated into the procurement and assessment processes for placement contractors and for outreach and admissions (OA) contractors. As a result, Job Corps currently has a comprehensive accountability system that covers its three main program components. In this chapter, we describe PMS and its effects on operations.

We begin by providing some background information on the purpose of the Job Corps PMS and on its general features. We then describe the PMS that was in effect at the time the study was implemented, as well as any major recent modifications to it. We then discuss how this accountability system affects Job Corps program operations, using information obtained from the center mail survey and the site visits. We also discuss the intended and unintended consequences of a PMS system for students.

A. BACKGROUND

There is a long tradition in Job Corps of program accountability, and integral to this philosophy is the use of a PMS to create a performance-driven program that focuses the attention of Job Corps contractors on providing high-quality services to improve student outcomes. In the early 1980s, Job Corps established a PMS for center operators. Recognizing that successful outcomes could not be achieved unless students stayed in the program for a considerable period, the initial system included two measures related to length of stay (as a proxy for in-program outcomes that were not explicitly measured) and an overall placement rate measure for students who stayed in the program at least six months. The system provided a report card that supported comparisons across centers and could be used in the center procurement process.

Over the years, performance standards have played a major role in determining whether Job Corps contractors are awarded option years on their contract. Job Corps awards contracts for center operations for a two-year base period, with three one-year options that the regional office may exercise. Although many factors enter this determination, high-performing contract centers that meet or exceed their standards are generally awarded option years, whereas low-performing center operators may be denied their option years, and the contract to operate the center may be ended. Currently, the center's report card carries 25 percent of the weight in a competitive procurement process. As a result, centers pay a great deal of attention to their performance and to factors that influence their ability to meet their standards. Moreover, there has historically been considerable competition among centers in a quest to achieve high overall rankings.

Over the past several years, the Job Corps center PMS has become very comprehensive. It currently includes both a student outcomes measurement system and a quality measurement system. The student outcome measurement system for program year (PY) 1998 includes nine measures, and the quality measurement system includes three additional measures and requires a complex formula for assessment of overall center performance.

In recognition of the interdependence of all Job Corps components, over the past few years, Job Corps has established a PMS for placement contractors and for OA agencies. Moreover, so that all the major components of the program were working together toward the same goals, the measures and standards selected for placement and OA contractors were designed to promote partnerships among all service providers. Beginning July 1, 1992, Job Corps introduced a PMS for placement agencies. This system operated for two years on an informational basis only and, effective July 1, 1994, a set of measures and standards was formally incorporated into all new contract competitions and all active placement contracts. The PMS for OA agencies was initially implemented on an informational basis on July 1, 1994. Effective July 1, 1996, a set of measures and standards was incorporated into all new competitions for new OA contracts and in all active OA contracts. Also, beginning in July 1996, Job Corps changed the name of its accountability system from PMS to the Outcome Measurement System (OMS) to emphasize the focus on student outcomes. In the rest of this chapter, we refer to the PMS as the OMS.

Next, we provide additional information about the Job Corps OMS that was in effect at the time of the National Job Corps Study. Because the center OMS had been in effect for over a decade, our discussion focuses primarily on the center OMS and its effects on center operations. Although we briefly describe the OMS for placement contractors and OA agencies, the placement agency system was in its first effective year of operation when we interviewed placement managers, and the OA system had not been officially introduced at the time we interviewed OA counselors or OA managers. As a result, we were able to collect little information about the experiences of placement or OA staff with these systems.

B. PROGRAM YEAR 1994 OUTCOME MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS AND RECENT CHANGES

At the time eligible applicants were initially selected into the National Job Corps Study (November 1994), the PY 1994 OMS was in effect for Job Corps centers, and a system for placement agencies had just been formally introduced. Since then, Job Corps has continued to follow its annual practice of convening a work group to review (and revise as necessary) its accountability systems to ensure they are consistent with overall program goals. In this section, we describe the center OMS that was in effect in PY 1994 and briefly indicate the types of changes that have been made to the center system in recent years. We also briefly describe the Job Corps OMS for placement contractors and OA agencies.

1. Program Year 1994 Center OMS

An OMS includes a set of measures, standards for each measure, and a method to aggregate performance across measures to create an overall assessment. In PY 1994, Job Corps organized its OMS into three areas: (1) in-program, (2) initial placement (based on outcomes measured within six months after termination), and (3) quality/compliance. As indicated in Table IX.1, the program area included four measures related to reading and math gains, GED attainment, and vocational completion. The placement area contained three measures, including an overall placement rate, as well as the average wage and a quality placement indicator primarily based on whether students are placed in a training-related job. The quality/compliance area was new in PY 1994 and combined an average-length-of-stay (ALOS) measure, which had always been included in the OMS in prior years in some way, and a quality/compliance rating based on an in-depth review of the center by regional office staff.

As the exhibit indicates, many of the measures included in the PY 1994 OMS were based on subsets of Job Corps students who met certain criteria. The specific measures and the pools of students used for each measure are developed by the National Office, in conjunction with a work group composed primarily of representatives of the various components of the Job Corps community. Every year, Job Corps forms a technical work group to review the accountability system for assessing contractor performance and to discuss issues that have been identified, in order to make any necessary changes to focus all contractors on quality outcomes for students. The PY 1994 pools

TABLE IX.1

PROGRAM YEAR 1994 JOB CORPS CENTER OUTCOME MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

Area/Measure	Pool of Students	Performance	Standard
Program			
Reading Gains	Scored less than 8.5 on TABE 5/6 reading test (or did not take test)	Percentage students in pool who gain two grades or score 8.5 on follow-up TABE reading test	30 percent
Math Gains	Scored less than 8.5 on TABE 5/6 math test (or did not take test)	Percentage students in pool who gain two grades or score 8.5 on follow-up TABE math test	33 percent
GED Rate	Without high school degree and scored 6.3 or above on TABE 5/6 reading test	Percentage students in pool who obtain GED/high school degree, including bonus for students who initially score low on test	Model-Based
Vocational Completion Rate	Stayed at least 60 days and participated in a vocational program with an approved training achievement record (TAR)	Percentage students in pool who complete vocation at completer or advanced completer level	56 percent
Placement			
Placement Rate	Students with a placement record and those with a record that was due but not received	Percentage students in pool placed in job/military or school, with bonus for AT/ACT transfers	69 percent
Average Wage	Students placed in a job/military	Average wage	Model-Based
Quality Placement Rate	Vocational completers with a placement record and those with a record that was due but not received	Percentage placed in a job training match, with bonus for students placed in college or AT/ACT transfers	51 percent
Quality/Compliance			
Length of Stay	All students	Average paid days, including bonus for AT/ACT transfers	236 days
ARPA Rating		Regional office rating of center quality/compliance	100

for reading and math gains were focused on students who initially scored low (less than 8.5 grade level) on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE); the GED pool focused on students who scored high (grade level of 6.3 or above) and within academic striking distance of obtaining a GED while in the program; the vocational completion rate pool focused on students who stayed at least 60 days and enrolled in a trade for which a training achievement record (TAR) had been developed to assess completion; and the quality placement rate pool was restricted to students who completed a vocation, a subgroup for whom a quality placement was expected.

The third column of Table IX.1 describes how performance was calculated for each measure. As indicated, "bonuses" were included in the calculations of PY 1994 center performance for three measures in order to provide centers with appropriate incentives/rewards. For example, the formula used to calculate the GED rate included a bonus for centers who work with students who score too low on the TABE test to be included in the pool to get a GED;[1] the placement rate included an automatic placement for students who transferred to a Job Corps advanced training (AT) or an advanced career training (ACT) program;[2] and the quality placement measure for PY 1994 included bonuses for students who were placed in college programs, as well as transfers to AT or ACT programs.[3] Job Corps has had a long history of providing performance incentives to centers to transfer students to AT programs to ensure these programs operate at full capacity. However, from PY 1994 to PY 1997, Job Corps removed many of the bonuses from the system because it was felt that they were not needed to encourage transfers to AT centers and because they distorted measures of performance, especially for small centers, and centers in regions with a greater availability of AT programs. However, in PY 1998, strong performance incentives have been reinstituted in the OMS to encourage student transfers to AT programs.

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[1] Specifically, the center GED attainment rate can be expressed as (A+B)/(C+B), where A represents the number of students in the pool who achieve a GED or high school diploma; B is the number of students who score too low on the initial TABE test to be included in the pool but who achieve a GED or high school diploma while in Job Corps; and C is the number of students in the pool. Adding B to both the numerator and the denominator results in a bonus in that the calculated GED attainment rate is greater than the rate for the eligible pool (that is, greater than A/C). The bonus can be particularly large for small centers.

[2] The formula for the placement rate bonus is conceptually the same as for the GED rate, except that in this case A represents the number of students in the pool who were placed, B represents the number of AT/ACT transfers, and C represents all students in the placement pool.

The final column shows the standards that were in effect in PY 1994 for each measure. Two primary issues are involved in setting standards: (1) the type of standard chosen, and (2) the specific level of the standard. Job Corps has traditionally used two different types of standards: (1) national numerical standards that are the same for all centers; and (2) model-based standards, which are adjusted individually to account for other factors that are beyond the control of the center. As this table indicates, during PY 1994, Job Corps used national numerical standards for seven of the nine measures but used model-based standards to adjust for differences in factors (such as student characteristics, local labor market conditions, GED state passing-score requirements) that affect the GED attainment rate and the average wage measure.[4]

The other aspect of setting standards concerns the specific level chosen for each measure. Because a key purpose of the center OMS has traditionally been to identify high-performing centers, standards have historically been set at a high level. The guiding philosophy has been that of a "bell curve," where standards have been set for a particular year based on historical data such that if measured performance did not change in the following year, then 25 percent of the centers would exceed the high end of the range of their standards, 50 percent would fall between the low and high end of their standards, and 25 percent would fall short of the low end of their standards on a specific measure.[5] Although the underlying principle of establishing standards has been a bell curve, policy considerations have sometimes resulted in standards that have been set at very high levels to focus attention on specific measures. At other times, standards for specific measures have been set at lower than the bell curve would dictate, because that level was either considered to be too high or would be perceived by centers as involving an excessive (and potentially unfair) change from the prior year. During the period immediately before the National Study, the main departure from the bell curve approach occurred in the placement area, where, to focus attention on improved performance, Job Corps established a higher target standard than historical data would have indicated for the initial placement rate.

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[3] The formula for the quality placement rate added both the number of college placements and AT/ACT transfers to both the numerator and denominator of the basic rate for the eligible pool.

[4] In recent years, Job Corps has increased to use of model-based standards to ensure equity in comparing center performance. Specifically, of the nine measures in the PY 1997 and PY 1998 systems, four of the measures use model-based standards.

In PY 1994, Job Corps made a policy decision to change the way it assessed center performance on each measure and overall. In previous years, a center's performance on each measure was judged in terms of whether it exceeded the high end of the standard (high performer), fell between the low and high end of the standard (medium performer), or fell short of the low point of the standard low performer. A set of rules were then applied, based on combinations of adjectival (high, medium, low) ratings of performance on individual measures, to aggregate across measures and reach an overall assessment. Under the rating system that began in PY 1994, a center's assessment on a particular measure was determined by comparison of actual performance to the standard on a percentage scale, where the standard was set at the highest point of the medium range of performance. Thus, centers that exactly met their standard achieved a rating of 100 percent on that measure, centers that exceeded their standard achieved a rating of over 100 percent, and centers that fell short of their standard achieved a rating of less than 100 percent. Within each of the three areas--in-program, placement and quality/compliance--performance was measured as the average of the percentage ratings of each measure. Since each of the three areas was given equal weight of one-third, the overall center rating was determined as a simple average of the three ratings.

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[5] Although a 25-50-25 rule was used to establish standards for many years, in PY 1997 Job Corps instituted a 30-40-30 rule to identify low-performing centers more effectively.

The change from an adjectival summary rating system--high, medium, low--to a percentage scale in PY 1994 represented an important policy decision. Job Corps recognized that an adjectival rating system encouraged centers not to maximize student outcomes, but to try to move from low to medium or from medium to high. In contrast, a percentage scale improved calculated center performance for every student who achieved the specific measure, even if the center was already above the 100 percent level. The shift to an overall percentage scale rating system also allowed centers to take advantage of very high measured performance in a specific area and potentially compensate for lower performance in another area. Together, these changes gave centers new avenues to increase their overall measured performance and relative ranking and resulted in even more center focus on the OMS.

2. Placement Agency OMS

Although a performance standards system was initially introduced to placement agencies for informational purposes in PY 1992 and PY 1993, the system officially became effective beginning with PY 1994. Through the placement outcome measurement system (POMS), placement agencies are held accountable for students who terminate from a center and who are assigned to them for placement services. At the time of the National Study, placement assistance was available to students for up to six months after termination but stopped with the initial placement, even if a student was placed soon after leaving Job Corps.[6]

As indicated in the top panel of Table IX.2, three measures were used to assess placement agency performance in PY 1994, measures very similar to those included in the placement area for center OMS. Specifically, the three measures included in the PY 1994 OMS for placement agencies were (1) the placement rate, (2) average wage, and (3) the job-training match rate among vocational completers. As such, the system included a quantity indicator (the placement rate) and two indicators of placement quality. The primary difference between the center OMS measures and the POMS measures lay in the job-training match measure, where centers were credited for college placements and transfers to advanced programs and where placement agencies were assessed exclusively on job-training matches. Such differences were the cause of some confusion and generated concern about whether a consistent message was being sent to all major components of the program. Since that time, modifications have been made to align the POMS even more closely for placement contractors with the OMS for centers.

Consistent with the Job Corps philosophy of focusing all contractors on common goals, the POMS was quite similar to the OMS during PY 1994. For example, standards were set with the same methods, and the level of the standards was identical. A percentage scale was introduced to assess agencies on performance relative to their standard on each measure. The overall assessment was computed with the placement rate measure given a weight of 60 percent and the other two quality measures given equal weights of 20 percent. The high weight applied to the placement rate

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[6] More recently, policy changes have required expanded placement assistance throughout the six-month post-termination eligibility period.

TABLE IX.2

JOB CORPS PLACEMENT OUTCOME MEASUREMENT SYSTEM (POMS) AND OUTREACH AND ADMISSIONS OUTCOME MEASUREMENT SYSTEM (OAOMS)

Area/Measure	Pool of Students	Performance	Standard
PY 1994 POMS			
Placement Rate	Students assigned to agency with placement record received or record due but not received	Percentage of students in pool placed in a job/military or school	69 percent
Average Wage	Students assigned to agency who were placed in a job/military	Average wage	Model-Based
Job Training Match Rate	Vocational completers assigned to agency with a placement record received or record due but not received	Percentage of of students in pool placed in a job that matches area of vocational training	51 percent
PY 1996 OAOMS			
Total Arrival Rate	Total (male plus female) quota for arrivals	Total number of arrivals divided by total quota	100 percent
30-Day Stay Rate	All students	Percentage who stay at least 30 paid days	90 percent

reflected the particularly strong program and policy focus at the time on getting students initially placed in a job or a schooling program that would better prepare them for the workplace.

3. Outreach and Admissions OMS

In PY 1995, the National Office introduced performance standards to OA contractors for information purposes. In PY 1996, Job Corps officially incorporated standards into procurement for new OA contracts and all existing contracts. The measures used directly reflect Job Corps' key goals of having centers operate at full capacity, serving eligible youth who are committed to the program. Specifically, as indicated in the second panel of Table IX.2, the OA quantity measure captured the extent to which the OA contractor meets the total quota of arrivals specified in their contract. Specifically, this measure combines quotas for males and females and divides the sum of recruited male and female students that arrive on center by their total quota, with a national standard of 100 percent. As such, this allows agencies that recruit both males and females to offset shortfalls for one gender with additional recruits of another. The quality measure determines the percentage of all arrivals who stay in Job Corps at least 30 paid days, with a national standard for this measure of 90 percent. The overall performance of an OA contractor has been determined with a percentage scale with the quantity measure given 60 percent of the weight and the quality measure 40 percent.

4. Recent Changes in Outcome Measurement Systems

In the past few years, partly as a result of major policy decisions, and partly through the normal process of annually reviewing the measurement systems, Job Corps has made a number of changes to the key program policies and to center and placement performance standards systems. These changes could affect student outcomes and the generalizability of the study findings. Perhaps the most important changes are those that occurred during the middle of the enrollment for the impact study. Specifically, in March 1995, a key change involved the expansion of the policy of zero tolerance for violence and drugs, partly in response to Senate Oversight Hearings that focused on perceived increased levels of violence on centers. The change also reflected a strong commitment to ensuring that students are able to participate in the Job Corps program without being subjected to violence or the threats of violence. Specifically, Job Corps implemented a zero-tolerance policy with a "one-strike-and-you're-out" provision for the most serious violent or criminal offenses, as well as for drug violations. At that same time, because of concerns that, to obtain high measured performance on the ALOS measure, centers were keeping some students who were disruptive and exhibiting violent behavior, in March 1995, the National Office decided to remove this measure from the center OMS retroactive to the beginning of PY 1994 and committed to developing a new OMS measure for PY 1995 to assess student safety. Moreover, to hold centers blameless for terminating students who violated the expanded zero-tolerance policy within the first 30 days on center, all such students are eliminated from the pools for all center OMS measures. OA agencies, however, continue to be held accountable for such students.

Over the past four years, several other noteworthy changes have been made to the OMS and the POMS. Briefly, the types of changes that Job Corps has made to its performance measurement systems since the beginning of the National Study include:

- More comprehensive OMS and POMS, with an expansion in OMS to nine measures and an expansion in POMS to five measures
- Greater focus on quality outcomes and longer-term outcomes in both the OMS and the POMS, with the addition of a full-time placement rate measure and the introduction of the first post-placement measure based on data 13 weeks after the initial placement
- Inclusion in the OMS of measures that focus attention on student safety and on operating centers at full capacity

- Broadening of the pools used for defining measures to focus centers and placement agencies on the outcomes obtained by all students served

- Greater comparability of the performance measurement systems for the three major components

C. EFFECTS OF PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS

Because of the key role performance standards play in the procurement process, contractors involved in OA, center operations, and placement have focused their attention increasingly on ways to improve measured performance. As a consequence, performance standards directly affect contractor and staff behavior, in both intended and unintended ways. The focus on measured performance, in combination with enrichment of the Job Corps curriculum, has resulted in considerable improvements in measured outcomes over the last decade. In this section we describe our findings concerning the intended and unintended effects of Job Corps' performance standards systems on program operations and student outcomes. Because the Outreach and Admissions and Placement systems were too new to have affected program operations significantly in these areas at the time of the study, we focus next on the effects of OMS on center operations. These findings are based primarily on data obtained from the center mail survey, as well as staff interviews and focus group discussions during the site visits.

In assessing the effects of the center OMS on Job Corps operations, we examine several different issues, including (1) staff knowledge/involvement with center standards and actual performance against those standards, (2) use of parallel management information systems to track performance, (3) use of incentive payments tied to performance on OMS, (4) use of OMS data to make management decisions, and (5) effects on operations related to specific performance measures.

Finally, we also briefly summarize the effects of the Job Corps performance assessment systems on the types of contractors that are operating the Job Corps program.

1. Staff Knowledge/Involvement

Center staff are quite aware of the standards that are set for the center, as well as the center's performance against those standards. All 110 centers that responded to the mail survey indicated that staff are generally aware of the OMS standards and of the center's performance against the standards. All the centers indicated that they provide OMS information to management staff, and nearly all indicated that they provide OMS information to academic instructors and vocational instructors. Roughly 3 to 5 percent of the centers indicated that they did not provide information from the OMS to counselors or residential living staff. Information from the staff focus groups confirmed these perceptions, as nearly all the focus groups that discussed this issue indicated that staff had regular access to OMS statistics and that the information was routinely circulated or discussed in staff meetings. Only one focus group meeting indicated that OMS information was not usually shared with center line staff.

In Table IX.3, we present information from the center mail survey on the frequency with which centers provide OMS data to management staff and line staff, as well as information on the provision of OMS data to students. As this table indicates, centers provide OMS information to management staff on a much more frequent basis than to other center staff. Overall, 67.3 percent of the centers reported providing OMS information to management staff on a weekly basis, as compared to 38.2 percent for other staff.[7] Virtually all other centers reported providing this information to staff on a

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[7] Although not reported in the table, there are large differences by region in the frequency of providing OMS information to staff, with all centers in Regions 1 and 7/8 reporting they provide OMS data to management staff on a weekly basis, as compared to Regions 2 and 10, where only about 55 to 60 percent of the centers reported doing so.

TABLE IX.3

PROVISION OF OMS INFORMATION TO STAFF AND STUDENTS
(Percentage of Centers That Provide OMS Information to Staff/Students, by Center Type)

	Center Type			
	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Weekly to Management Staff	67	37	80	77
Monthly to Management Staff	33	63	20	23
Weekly to Other Center Staff	38	20	44	46
Monthly to Other Center Staff	60	80	56	46
Whether Provide to Students	68	63	70	69

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

monthly basis. Contract centers are also much more likely to provide OMS information on a weekly basis to both management staff and line staff. These differences likely reflect the more important role that the PMS plays in the procurement process for contract centers. About two-thirds (68.2 percent) of the centers reported that they provided information from OMS to their students, with contract centers again slightly more likely than CCCs to report providing this information to students.

2. Use of Parallel Management Information Systems

OMS information and formal monthly reports are provided to centers through SPAMIS. To be able to verify the accuracy of the SPAMIS reports and to obtain additional information on center performance, many centers maintain their own parallel management information systems that are integrated with SPAMIS. Specifically, based on our site visits, we found that about three-fourths of the centers maintain a parallel system, and this rate is considerably higher for contract centers than for CCCs. These systems are generally centrally supported and managed by the corporation that holds the center contract. According to center staff, these systems contain a much broader range of pre-termination student data than SPAMIS, offer greater flexibility for customizing reports, and are more user-friendly and timely.

A key use of these parallel MIS systems involves tracking performance against center standards as measured in the OMS. First, corporate headquarters use the systems to monitor the performance of the centers under their management umbrella and to identify trends or potential problems in performance before the OMS reports are available. Second, centers routinely use data from their own MIS system to plan and allocate resources and to troubleshoot problems. Because the OMS reports are available only at the center level, many centers indicated they needed other information at a lower level of aggregation to understand overall performance better. As a result, many centers use their parallel MIS systems to track performance by vocation, by dorm, and even by individual instructor. This helps centers identify strengths and weaknesses. Finally, centers also use their in-house MIS systems to track data that they find useful but that are no longer included in the OMS. Specifically, several centers mentioned that they continue to track average length of stay, even though it is no longer included as a measure in the OMS.

3. Use of Incentive Payments

Job Corps uses incentive payments that are tied to measured center performance as a method to focus center staff attention on OMS. As indicated in Table IX.4, the data from the center mail survey incentive payments that are tied to OMS performance are used as incentives for management and other center staff in 61 percent of the centers. In addition, about half the centers reported that other staff were eligible for incentive payments or bonuses depending on center performance as measured in the OMS. Contract centers are much more likely than CCCs to use incentive payments tied to OMS performance for center directors and for other staff. There are fairly large differences among regions in the use of incentive payments tied to OMS performance (Appendix Table B.28). For example, at the time of the National Study, all center directors in contract centers in Regions 3 and 10 were eligible for incentive payments or bonuses based on measured OMS performance, as compared to only half the centers in Region 6 and two-thirds of those in Region 5.

Table IX.4 also indicates that centers routinely use measured OMS performance as a factor in performance appraisals of individual center staff. Specifically, 86 percent of the centers reported that OMS performance is used as a factor in the performance appraisals of individual center staff, and this is quite similar across center types. This finding is consistent with data from the site visits that indicated that many centers tie incentive payments and merit pay increases to center performance measures.

TABLE IX.4

STAFF INCENTIVES OR BONUSES
(Percentage of Centers That Use Incentives/Bonuses Based on OMS Performance)

	Center Type			
	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Center Director Eligible for Incentive/Bonus Based on OMS Performance	61	10	82	77
Staff Eligible for Incentive/Bonus Based on OMS Performance	51	17	69	54
OMS Performance Used in Staff Appraisals	86	83	87	89

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

4. Use of OMS Data

The results from the mail survey and the site visits strongly indicate that many centers were in the process of creating, or had already created, a performance-focused culture. This is quite consistent with the results in the first column of Table IX.5, which indicate that the large majority of centers (89 percent) regularly use OMS information to make management decisions. This is also consistent with the information obtained during the site visits, which indicated overwhelmingly that center directors and other management staff regarded OMS data to be essential to good management. Only one center director we talked with during the site visits did not consider OMS data to be central to decision-making at the center. The pattern of using OMS information to make management decisions is widespread across CCCs and contract centers. Although not reported, there seems to be a tendency for contract centers in the western regions (Regions 9 and 10) to be less likely to use OMS information in making management decisions.[8] The pattern of centers in Regions 9 and 10 being less likely to use OMS information to make management decisions is interesting, as centers in these two regions have historically been rated higher on OMS than those centers in other regions.

The mail survey also collected information concerning centers' practices in making decisions about whether to keep or terminate specific students and the role that OMS plays in the process. Approximately one-third (32.7 percent) of all centers reported that in making decisions about whether to terminate a particular student, they take into account the effect that decision will have on their OMS statistics. As shown in the second row of Table IX.5, there are no differences in this practice between CCCs and contract centers overall, but contract centers that have a significant nonresidential population are much more likely than primarily residential centers to follow this

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[8] See Appendix Table B.29.

TABLE IX.5

USE OF OMS INFORMATION IN CENTER DECISIONS
(Percentage of Centers That Use OMS Information as Input to Various Decisions)

	Center Type			
	Overall	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Use of OMS Data for Management Decisions	89	87	89	92
Use of OMS Data in Student Retention Decisions	33	33	26	46

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

practice. Although not reported in the table, it appears that this practice is much more common in Regions 5 and 6 than in other regions.[9]

Information obtained from the site visits reinforced the impression of a performance-driven culture reflected in these mail survey results. For example, many centers hold regular (usually weekly) meetings of management staff to discuss which students should be put in the exit phase of the program, as well as when certain students already in the exit phase should be terminated. During the site visits, project staff were able to observe such meetings. Consistent with the picture from the mail survey, extensive staff resources are usually devoted to these meetings. The meetings we observed typically included a total of 5 to 10 management staff and staff members from multiple areas (such as academic, vocational, residential living), who met for a couple of hours each week to discuss what to do with students who were considered for termination. The discussion during these meetings took into account a wide range of factors, including how far along the student was in his or her program, how much additional effort and time were required to complete certain activities and the student's behavior and how it affected the center environment and other students. The discussion also typically included a review of the student's credits on each of the OMS measures and the result of terminating the student on the center's OMS statistics. As such, the impact on the center's measured performance is clearly one of several factors taken into account in making termination decisions, and depending on the other factors, could be the deciding factor for many students.

These practices are also consistent with information obtained in the staff focus groups indicating that management emphasis on performance statistics had increased the pressure and stress of their jobs and affected decisions on student retention. For example, some of the larger contractors have reinforced the performance outcome orientation through their own management practices.

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[9] See Appendix Table B.29.

Specifically, some have established for their centers performance goals that are higher (for example, 5 percent higher) than the OMS standards set by the National Office. Moreover, one of the focus groups mentioned that to increase measured performance, staff actively tried to persuade students who were contemplating quitting to change their minds, with the underlying intent to increase center measured performance. Also, during two focus group meetings, staff indicated that to maximize OMS statistics, centers implemented the zero-tolerance policy unevenly. Specifically, it was reported that centers were less likely to terminate better-performing students for a zero-tolerance violation than other students who were not likely to obtain subsequent OMS credits.

5. Operational Impacts Related to Specific Measures

As the above discussion indicates, centers devote considerable time, energy, and other resources to managing their measured performance as reported in the OMS. Although some of the staff we talked with perceived that too great an emphasis was placed on "numbers" as opposed to "quality services for students," this view was held by a minority of the center management staff we interviewed. Some of the effects of the OMS on center behavior, such as the general focus on improving student outcomes, is clearly intentional. Other effects of the OMS on center behavior are unintended. Below we briefly highlight some of the intended and unintended consequences of the OMS on Job Corps center operations related to specific performance measures.

- ***Despite removing the ALOS standard from the OMS in PY 1996 to reduce the incentive to "warehouse" students, many centers continue to track length of stay and use it as a diagnostic tool to gauge OMS performance.*** Some center staff applauded the decision to remove the ALOS measure from OMS, because they felt it encouraged unproductive warehousing of students to meet specific standards. In contrast, others viewed it as detrimental because it resulted in excessive emphasis on moving the student along in the program and put more pressure on placement outcomes. Many centers continue to track ALOS internally, because they consider it to be a useful monitoring tool, although they no longer use it in deciding when to terminate students.

- ***The basic-skills attainment standards in reading and math that focus on literacy and numeracy have resulted in the introduction of enrichment classes to help students, as well as extra efforts to test students.*** As described in Chapter V, about half the centers have developed Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP) classes, smaller classes for students with low initial academic abilities to help them meet the basic-skills standards. It is unlikely that these special enrichment classes or other special tutoring programs would have been introduced in the absence of center standards related to literacy and numeracy. The other impact of the academic standards on center operations concerns the emphasis placed on ensuring that students receive initial and follow-up tests. Although the focus on testing all students initially is quite appropriate, this has resulted in considerable efforts to administer tests at every chance (for example, when students leave shortly after their last test or significantly after completing academics), and this multiple retesting raises issues related to the validity of the tests.

- ***There are concerns that the vocational completion standard has encouraged staff to "check off TARs" and emphasize lower completion levels in order to improve measured performance.*** The credibility and validity of the vocational completion rate measure has been questioned extensively by the National Office and the work groups used to develop the OMS. These concerns were also raised during our site visits. The main criticisms are that there is no independent assessment tool available to judge whether a student has completed a vocational program and that the standard has put considerable pressure on centers and instructors to indicate that a student has completed a trade by "checking off" the appropriate skills on the TARs, without the student having demonstrated each of the skills. There is also some concern that centers set the sights of some students too low by encouraging them to complete an "early step-off" level in a trade (such as sandwich maker, gas station attendant) to ensure they count as a vocational completer against the standard, but recognizing that students who terminate at this level have traditionally achieved lower placement outcomes.

- ***The high standards established for the placement rate measure successfully focused centers and placement agencies on improving measured initial placement outcomes, some of which occurred through increasing center staff resources to track students and increase the reporting of placements to ensure that centers receive the credit.*** Historically, centers have been reluctant to embrace the placement rate measure as a center standard, because they view the placement activity as beyond their control. However, placement rates have been included as a center measure since inception, because the academic, vocational, and residential living services provided on center are critical to students' abilities to find jobs on their own. Although Job Corps students are very mobile and difficult to locate, primary responsibility for contacting them and providing placement services rests with placement agencies. However, centers have not fully trusted the data on placement outcomes provided by placement agencies and as a result spend additional staff resources to conduct follow-up activities to ensure they receive appropriate OMS credits. Although these efforts have resulted in more complete student outcome data, because these staff resources generally result not in improved outcomes for students but only in the recording of the placement results, it would be better to have the placement contractors locate the students and to have center staff focus on services to students.

- ***Although the job-training match rate is conceptually a good measure, the crosswalk used to determine matches between training and the occupation of the job could be manipulated and, since centers have difficulty changing the vocational programs they offer, it is difficult for them to respond to changes in labor market conditions and influence this measure.*** The underlying notion of providing training to students for jobs that are available and then placing them in jobs that match their skills is fundamentally sound. However, the crosswalk used to determine a job-training match is based on whether the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes of the training recorded initially as a DOT code by centers match the CIP code of the job based on the DOT code recorded by the placement agency. Because DOT codes can be assigned to multiple CIP codes, and because it is in the interest of both centers and placement agencies to record underlying codes that can be matched to maximize performance on this measure, this process may overstate the true job-training match rate. The other potential issue with this measure is that, since centers face considerable difficulties in changing vocational offerings, they are unable to respond to changes in local labor market conditions and provide training in areas that could appropriately increase the job-training match rate.

6. Changes in Contractors

Finally, as described in other chapters, the focus on measured performance has also been responsible for recent shifts in the Job Corps contractor landscape. For example, because of concerns regarding performance and responsiveness, use of SESAs as either OA or placement contractors has declined substantially. As recently as a decade ago, SESAs were the major providers of OA&P services; by the time of the National Study, these providers accounted for only about 15 percent of all students served by OA&P contractors. Correspondingly, the performance-driven system has resulted in an enormous growth of private, for-profit contractors for providing OA&P services, with especially strong growth in the use of center contractors to provide fully integrated services to the students they serve.

The performance report card has also been significant in the center procurement process. In recent years, a greater number of centers have been reassessed, and those in which the incumbent has had low performance have been awarded to new contractors. Finally, it is especially significant that concerns over poor performance ratings recently caused Job Corps for the first time in over 30 years to close one CCC center and reassign another to a private contractor.

D. SUMMARY

As described above, the National Office has a comprehensive OMS for center operators, OA contractors, and placement agencies, a system that focuses these three major components on similar key program objectives. A detailed system was in effect for centers in PY 1994 at the time we began enrolling applicants into the National Job Corps Study. A number of improvements have been made to the OMS for centers over the past few years to focus on student outcomes, and the overall Job Corps accountability systems have expanded to include OA&P contractors.

Our results indicate that the center OMS is a powerful management tool that has resulted in a performance-driven program. This has produced a number of positive outcomes for the program, including attention to student safety issues, new programs to improve basic skills, a new emphasis on services and skills to support post-program attachment to the labor force, and (along with other program enhancements) increases in measured center performance over time. The OMS has also created staff financial incentives tied to contractor performance, as well as placed considerable pressure on staff at all levels in the program to improve measured performance. This has in turn resulted in both intended and unintended consequences. Finally, to the extent that the OMS drives contractor behavior, the changes in the system over the past few years (and over the next few years) must be assessed for full understanding of the generalizability of the forthcoming findings of the impact study.

X. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Job Corps is a large, complex program. This report has presented a detailed description of how it and its many components operate. We have sought both to describe the design and rationale for the various components and to convey a sense of how the program "works on the ground."

The primary purpose of the process study is to support the forthcoming analysis of the net impacts of Job Corps on students' post-program labor market and related outcomes. Whether the impact study finds that Job Corps has positive net impacts on the youth who participate or has no impacts, the process study and its findings will play a critical role in explaining the net impact findings.

Suppose the forthcoming impact study finds that Job Corps has positive net effects on its students or on some subgroups of students but not others. In these circumstances, the information from the process study will help analysts, program managers and staff, and policymakers to understand why, among the many ineffective programs for disadvantaged youth, Job Corps stands out as different. The data on program variations we have gathered through the process study and presented in this report will help us to understand the relationship between student outcomes and specific program features or variations in program operations across centers. Section B outlines how we plan to conduct this analysis and some of the features we plan to examine.

Suppose, on the other hand, that the impact study finds small or even no positive net effects of participation in Job Corps. Even in this case, the process study's data and findings will help to shed light on the reasons. In this circumstance, the first question policymakers will ask is "Is Job Corps so poorly designed or so poorly implemented that we could not reasonably expect positive benefits?" We believe that careful readers of this report will conclude, as we have concluded, that Job Corps' program design is well thought out and, on the whole, very well implemented. We have concluded that if Job Corps shows no net impacts, poor program implementation will not be a satisfactory explanation.

In this chapter we offer several concluding observations about program operations and describe how we expect to use the information derived from this process study in the forthcoming analysis of program net impacts on students. These concluding observations reflect our current judgments about some key program operational features, judgments that are based largely on discussions with staff and other data collected about program observations. These observations do not constitute conclusions of the study, because conclusions about the program should be based on a full analysis of the data on net impacts.

A. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Job Corps' organizational structure is unique among education and job-training programs in that it unites federal agencies, private contractors, and national unions. It is also the only national program that is administered, through its nine regional offices, primarily at the federal level. Program operations--outreach and admissions (OA), center operations, and post-program placement--are carried out by a wide variety of entities under contract with the regional offices. This structure has existed for over 30 years and, as a result, Job Corps has the following distinguishing characteristics:

- Uniformity in program form and content
- Federal direction on key programmatic issues
- A long-term relationship with eight national unions and a building industry association that provide vocational training and access to employment opportunities

- Continuity, especially in center operations, many of which have been provided by the same contractor for decades
- Career paths for staff that have attracted many committed people

Continuity and career paths have created a rare infrastructure of knowledge about the program.

The Job Corps program is performance driven. Job Corps has a performance standards system in place for OA agencies, center operators, and placement agencies. Initial contracts and option years are awarded in large part according to the contractor's measured performance, and many contractors in turn award incentive payments to their managers and staff based on the contractor's report card. The measured outcomes of centers and placement agencies have improved considerably over the last decade. Many changes in program curriculum, as well as in contract structure (from fixed price to cost plus fixed-fee contracts), have contributed to this improvement. Job Corps' performance standards system has appropriately received much credit for focusing program efforts in a manner that has facilitated these observed improvements. The Job Corps focus on performance has also evoked criticisms from program staff concerning perceived limitations and unintended consequences of the performance measurement system.

The national expanded zero tolerance (ZT) policy for drugs and violence instituted in April 1995 has had a profound positive effect on behavior management and the general climate at centers. The ZT policy requires expulsion of students who use drugs or alcohol or engage in violence while in the program. Center staff overwhelmingly attributed improvements in center safety and a decline in drugs, alcohol, and violence on center to the introduction of ZT. Some expressed concerns about the inconsistent implementation of ZT, and a few said it has become more difficult to help students with drug and alcohol problems because they risk expulsion for revealing their activity.

OA counselors have limited firsthand knowledge about the centers for which they recruit. The turnover of OA counselors is high, their job tenure is short, and their experience with Job Corps is limited. Most counselors have visited only a small percentage of these centers, in part because most counselors are far from the centers they recruit for. Thus OA counselors lack a base of personal experience that can enable them to describe accurately what life on centers is like. In this context, OA counselors must be able to draw on high-quality sources of information for describing center life to prospective students.

Yet counselors reported that they receive materials from few centers. OA managers confirmed that counselors rarely receive up-to-date information about the centers in the region, have little or no material about specific centers, and must rely mostly on generic descriptions. Students and center staff confirmed that OA counselors lack up-to-date information on center vocational offerings and sometimes give students inaccurate or incomplete information about training opportunities. However, center directors painted a very different picture of the information provided to OA counselors about their center. Nearly all centers said that they supply brochures to OA contractors, most claim to provide videotapes, and just less than half indicated that they regularly provide OA contractors with information on waiting lists for vocations. Although we cannot fully explain the discrepancy between what centers report providing and what OA counselors report receiving, it could reflect the high turnover of OA counselors, or problems within OA agencies in disseminating materials to staff.

Eligibility determination screens into the program primarily youth who meet objective, easily documented criteria; OA counselors seldom screen out youth whose aspirations and capacity to benefit are questionable but who meet all objective criteria. The 11 program eligibility criteria can be divided into two categories: (1) those that are straightforward and easily verifiable (age, selective service registration, residency, economic disadvantage); and (2) those that are vaguer or more difficult to measure (environment impairing life opportunities, aspirations, and capability to benefit from Job Corps).

Counselors rely on the criteria specified in the Policy Requirements Handbook (PRH) to assess whether the characteristics of an applicant's environment impair his or her ability to participate successfully in the program. However, because the PRH provides guidance only on how to assess an applicant's disruptive home life, and because contractors are reluctant to provide additional explicit instructions regarding cultural deprivation, limited job opportunities, and disruptive community factors, OA counselors have wide latitude in determining whether an applicant meets the environment criterion. In practice, almost no one is found ineligible solely on this basis.

OA counselors are also required to assess the capability and aspirations of applicants to ensure that they can fully participate and benefit from Job Corps. OA counselors assess applicants' suitability for Job Corps by evaluating a number of factors reflective of capabilities and aspirations, including educational objectives, vocational objectives, and behaviors and attitudes.

Job Corps offers training programs in more than 75 vocational areas, although 80 percent of all potential training slots are accounted for by the 10 largest vocational areas. During 1996, the Job Corps centers had about 39,000 training slots, of which over 30,000 were in the 10 largest vocational areas: clerical occupations, health occupations, carpentry, masonry, building and apartment maintenance, food service, auto/truck mechanic, welding, painter and electrician. To broaden their range of vocational programs, many centers in urban areas are contracting with other local training providers to allow Job Corps students to participate in their training programs.

Job Corps follows a distinctive open-entry, open-exit approach to vocational training. This approach provides individualized instruction, permitting students to enter with different levels of preparation and progress at their own pace. The Job Corps vocational training program offers competency-based instruction with a curriculum developed with input from business and labor. Student activity guides (SAGs) and training achievement records (TARs) focus both instructors and students on learning and demonstrating specific competencies required for each occupation. In addition to classroom- and shop-based instruction, Job Corps provides "workplace" learning experiences through Vocational Skills Training (VST) projects and Work Experience Programs (WEPs). Job Corps' VST projects provide students with the opportunity to learn occupational competencies while performing the types of activities they are expected to perform on a job. VST projects involve students in occupationally relevant activities that improve centers' facilities--such as building a new structure, renovating existing structures, or painting buildings--or assist community-based organizations in carrying out similar activities. WEPs are the culmination of students' vocational training in many areas where they do not have an opportunity to participate in a VST project. A WEP places students in an unpaid position with a local employer for six weeks to perform duties related to their area of training in a work-like setting.

Job Corps attaches importance to ensuring that students are trained in jobs for which demand for workers exists, but new trades are added very slowly. Projected annual openings are expected to be very high in the two largest vocational areas, clerical occupations (nearly 300,000 openings per year) and health occupations (about 120,000 openings per year). Furthermore, Job Corps has the capacity to train only a small fraction of these annual totals. Together, these trades account for about one-third of training offered. In contrast, the number of annual openings in welding, carpentry, and masonry will be in the range of 10,000 to 30,000, and Job Corps' current capacity will provide large fractions of the new workers in these areas.

Job Corps is very slow in adjusting its trade offerings to shifts in employers' demands for workers. Centers monitor placement rates and other indicators that training is meeting employer needs. They also consult with local employers to anticipate demand. Training capacity in current Job Corps trades that are not performing well can be reduced or eliminated fairly easily, and capacity in trades that perform well can be expanded. However, adjustments in the form of opening trades that have not previously been offered are very gradual. Centers proposing to start offering new trades must demonstrate that a labor market exists and that training can be provided cost-effectively. Regional and National Office staff must approve all adjustments in capacity, especially with a new trade, and recent experience of the centers we visited indicates that changes are made very gradually.

Through a highly structured curriculum, the remedial component of Job Corps' academic education program improves the literacy and numeracy skills of students who enter with diverse skill levels. Students typically enter Jobs Corps with substantial academic deficits. Only about 20 percent possess a high school diploma or equivalent, and nearly 60 percent read below the level at which preparation for the GED exam can take place. Entry testing determines an appropriate level in the program. Instruction is individualized and self-paced. Classes are open-entry, open-exit.

The Computer Managed Instruction (CMI) system provides uniform curriculum and program delivery of the major academic courses--reading, math, and writing/thinking skills--across centers. CMI is an integral part of the assessment and teaching components of these courses. While academic instructors have some flexibility in their instructional approach, the Job Corps curriculum and CMI dictate the contents of the courses almost entirely. To supplement the core academic program, most centers provide remedial tutorial programs for those who need and want extra help.

Residential living is one of Job Corps most distinctive programmatic components. Residential advisors (RAs) and counselors are the key support staff. RAs, who oversee dormitory life, have more one-on-one contact than any other staff because they interact with students where they live. They serve as mentors and surrogate parents for youth, many of whom are living away from home among strangers for the first time. Their job duties also include providing social skills training and helping students conduct other formal group activities. Counselors serve as advocates for students, helping them to resolve scheduling conflicts, problems with their classes, and personal difficulties. Counselors' caseloads range from 60 to 80 students. Job Corps provides a variety of special residential support services to the minority of students who reside at home while they train. Though efforts are made to integrate nonresidential students into center life, their Job Corps experience is very different from the experience of residential students.

Progress and Performance Evaluation Panels (P/PEPs) are the cornerstone of Job Corps' student evaluation process. While there is widespread support for the P/PEP concept, both staff and students felt the process was unnecessarily time-consuming. Each student meets with individual instructors, RAs, and counselors before the actual P/PEP session, which is little more than a pro forma review of what the student already has discussed with individual staff. The session serves no useful purpose and takes time away from training. About 20 percent of the centers visited were using a streamlined process in which each student meets individually with staff from different areas and then attends a summative conference with the counselor.

The social skills training (SST) program in Job Corps is widely acknowledged as important and very beneficial for students, but staff believed the program we observed during site visits needed substantial improvement. Job Corps has developed a highly structured SST curriculum to help students attain the social skills necessary to function effectively in the world of work. However, the curriculum was widely viewed by staff and students as "too elementary" and as focusing too narrowly on trying to teach basic social skills to someone who lacked all social skills.

The SST sessions are taught by the RAs, who are for the most part inadequately trained to teach social skills effectively. Many SST sessions we observed followed the prescribed curriculum but did not effectively impart the targeted social skill to the students. Since the process study data were collected, Job Corps has revised the SST curriculum to make it better integrated with academic and vocational training.

The physical condition of centers' facilities varies substantially, dramatically affecting the students' living area. Dormitory facilities range from brand new (essentially equivalent to college dormitories where two students share a room with a private bathroom) to old military-style barracks with up to 16 students sharing a large open area and a much larger number sharing bathroom facilities. The physical condition of centers varied extensively because of the design of the original use of the facility. While a number of new facilities have been constructed recently expressly for use as Job Corp centers, Job Corps has historically taken over facilities used for other purposes. These older facilities have ranged from military bases, civilian conservation corps camps from the 1930s, internment camps from the 1940s, hotels, and hospitals. The disparity in the physical facilities of centers is most notable in the dormitories, where newer facilities compare with modern college dormitories and older facilities resemble military barracks. Improving dormitory facilities, especially for females, was frequently cited as a way to improve student retention. Specific strategies mentioned were to make the dormitories more like college dormitories that provide more privacy (for example, two students to a room) and to upgrade the general condition of some of the older dorms.

Placement agency services are limited in scope and substance. Placement agencies are responsible for helping former Job Corps students (1) get jobs that will allow them to be self-sufficient, or (2) pursue additional training. They are required to provide placement assistance for a period of six months to all terminating students. However, most staff effort is devoted to locating students and to maintaining some minimal level of contact with all students over the six-month placement horizon. Placement staff rarely meet with former students in person, and most contact is by telephone, which limits the possibility of providing comprehensive placement services. Many managers suggested that more intensive services could be provided to students who completed the program if placement contractors were relieved of the requirement to serve all students regardless of whether they had had significant exposure to Job Corps.

B. PLANS FOR EXPLORING VARIATIONS IN OPERATIONAL FEATURES THAT MAY AFFECT STUDENT IMPACTS

This report has presented extensive information about the main elements of the Job Corps program model and important variations in the way the program model is implemented across centers and OA and placement agencies. These variations in practices may lead to variations in students' Job Corps experiences and, in turn, in post-program outcomes. Exploring the relationship between program practices and program impacts on student outcomes will be an important part of the component impact and subgroup impact analyses. For this purpose, data on operational features from the process analysis will be linked to follow-up survey data for each youth in the research sample.

This section discusses our plan for examining whether variations in operational features affect student outcomes. In the first section, we briefly summarize how the process analysis data will be combined with the follow-up survey data to estimate the relationship between program practices and student outcomes. Next, we list the main categories of program characteristics and practices for which we will estimate program impacts as part of the component impact analysis.

1. Linking the Process Analysis and Follow-Up Interview Data

We collected two key pieces of information on program research *and* control group members at the time of random assignment. These will be used to link the process analysis data characterizing the program experiences to individual sample members. First, we obtained from the ETA-652 program intake forms the six-digit code of the OA office that recruited each youth. Second, we obtained (from a special form developed for the evaluation) information on the Job Corps center that OA counselors expected the youths to attend at the time they applied. These anticipated center assignments were very accurate.[1] Thus, we have precise information on the OA agency office that recruited each youth and the center that each youth was likely to have attended (if assigned to the program group). This information will be used to link data items from the OA counselor telephone survey and the center mail survey to *each* program research and control group member, because these surveys collected information on all OA agency offices and centers. In addition, we will use data from SPAMIS to construct measures that characterize the center each sample member was designated to attend.

We will examine the relationship between particular program features and student outcomes by comparing the outcomes of program research and control group members who are linked to centers and OA agencies with those features. The effectiveness of a particular feature will be estimated in isolation as well as after controlling for the effects of other program features.

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[1] See the report entitled "National Job Corps Study: Methodological Appendixes on Sample Implementation and Baseline Interviewing."

This analysis will address the effects of a particular program approach in centers and OA agencies that *chose* to adopt this approach. The results cannot necessarily be used to address how the approach would work in other centers or OA agencies that chose to adopt other approaches.[2] Nevertheless, the analysis will provide important suggestive findings about the success of particular program approaches if they were to be adopted on a broader scale.

The process analysis data will also be used to estimate how variations in center and OA agency practices relate to variations in youth experiences in Job Corps centers (for example, whether an eligible applicant actually enrolls in a center, duration of stay in centers, chosen vocational training area, and program completion status). This descriptive analysis is important because in general, variations in program practices can result in variations in long-term student outcomes only if they first result in variations in in-program experiences. Predicting these "mediating" in-program outcomes using the OA agency and center data will also allow us to estimate the direct effects of the mediating outcomes on eventual student outcomes.[3] These analyses will be conducted with program group members only, because data on actual in-program experiences are not available for control group members.

2. Main Categories of Program Features to Be Examined in the Impact Analysis

On the basis of the detailed process analysis findings, we will select, from the large number analyzed, a subset of program features for which impacts will be estimated in the component impact analysis. It is important that these program features be selected *before* the follow-up data are analyzed, so that a structure for the component impact analysis is provided, and so that the process analysis guides the impact analysis and not the reverse.

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[2] This is because there may be unobserved differences between centers and OA agencies that adopt different approaches. In this case, it may not be accurate to attribute variations in component impacts to differences in program approaches, because they could be due to other factors not controlled for in the estimation procedures.

[3] The Study Design Report describes this statistical modeling procedure in detail.

We will use three main criteria to identify key center and OA agency features that will be examined in the component impact analysis. First, we select only program features that varied significantly across sites at the time the process analysis data was collected. Second, we select features that we believe could influence the experiences of youths in Job Corps centers, because as discussed, variations in practices can lead to variations in eventual student economic outcomes only if they first lead to variations in in-program experiences. Thus, the practices that we select are posited to influence who shows up on center, duration of stay on center, and the quality of the learning environment. Finally, we select practices that can be well defined and measured accurately with data from the OA counselor telephone and center mail surveys.

The categories of program features and examples of specific items that will be examined in the component impact analysis are displayed in Table X.1. The items fall into eight categories:

1. Characteristics of OA agencies and offices

2. Characteristics of OA counselors

3. Job attributes of OA counselors

4. OA counselor practices (such as outreach activities, eligibility determination, center assignment, and admissions counseling)

5. Characteristics of Job Corps centers

6. Linkages of center and OA&P activities

7. Characteristics of center staff

8. Center practices (such as pre-orientation and orientation activities, vocational training, academic education, and center life)

TABLE X.1

CATEGORIES OF CENTER AND OA OFFICE FEATURES THAT WILL BE EXAMINED IN THE COMPONENT IMPACT ANALYSIS

Category	Examples of Specific Features
Characteristics of OA Agencies and Offices	Contractor type and size, length of time OA contract was held; number of centers for which OA office recruits; distance from OA office to centers for which recruits
Characteristics of OA Counselors	Tenure on the job; tenure in Job Corps; extent to which the gender and race of OA counselors and recruits match
Job Attributes of OA Counselors	Full-time/part-time status; method of compensation; extent to which OA office staff recruit all types of youths or specialize in certain types of youths only; allocation of time to outreach, admissions, and other activities; whether counselor has goals and gets incentives for arrivals and length of stay on center
OA Counselor Practices	
Outreach Activities of OA Counselors	Extent of home visits, center tours, and contact with sources of referrals
Eligibility Determination of Program Applicants	Factors used in assessing applicants' suitability for Job Corps
Center Assignment	Extent of flexibility to assign students to centers; extent of information collected about centers for which recruits; extent of waiting lists
Admissions Counseling	Approaches to managing expectations related to youths' center and vocational preferences; provision of information (such as videotapes and written materials) to youths about their assigned centers; extent of contact with youths between center assignment and arrival at a center

TABLE X.1 *(continued)*

Category	Examples of Specific Features
Characteristics of Centers	Type of center operator (CCC or private); age of center; length of time contract was held; center capacity and utilization; urban/rural location; region; whether primarily a residential or significantly nonresidential center; type of recreational facilities on and off center; whether center is a secured facility; number of serious negative incident reports in past year; proportion of students who are 16 and 17 and who are female
Linkages of Center and OA&P Activities	Whether center has an OA contract, a placement contract, or both; whether OA counselors and placement staff are near the center
Characteristics of Center Staff	Staff tenure in center for key management, residential living, counseling, academic, and vocational staff; extent of staff vacancies; extent to which the gender and race of center staff and students match by type of staff
Center Practices	
Pre-Orientation and Orientation Activities	Whether the center sends out pre-arrival information letters, makes pre-arrival phone calls, and conducts center tours to prospective students; size of student intake group; whether an initial interview is conducted with new students; housing arrangements during orientation; length of orientation program
Vocational Training	Number of trades offered; number of trades offered in high demand areas; schedule of classes (half-day, week-on/week-off, other); number of weeks from arrival until student starts trade; whether uses waiting lists for trades which are full and the approach to assigning students who want trades which are full; extent of participation in the OEP; whether staff or students are responsible for selecting student's trade; the extent to which students can change trades
Academic Education	Nature of materials used to supplement the regular Job Corps curriculum

TABLE X.1 *(continued)*

Category	Examples of Specific Features
Center Life	
SSTs	How often students attend SST sessions; staff who conduct the SSTs
Recreational activities	Proportion of students who regularly participate in recreational activities, by gender and residential/nonresidential status
Child care	Whether center has an on-center child care program for students' children
P/PEPs	Staff involved in P/PEPs; proportion of P/PEPs that result in a bonus; extent to which staff meet to discuss students' progress outside the P/PEPs
Center discipline	Whether all staff are involved in carrying out the discipline system, or only the center director, CSO and security staff
Performance Management System	Extent to which staff are aware of PMS standards and actual performance; whether the center director uses PMS information to make management decisions; whether staff are eligible for incentive payments on the basis of PMS results

The potential relationship between the measures in Table X.1 and student outcomes has been discussed in the report. Next, we provide examples to illustrate the types of analyses that we will conduct and the reasons we selected these analyses.

As a first example, we will look at the extent to which the similarity of the gender and racial composition of center staff and students affects student outcomes. Students may be more likely to find positive role models and mentors if students and staff (and especially residential, counseling, and educational staff) have similar backgrounds. Positive role models could improve students' in-program experiences, which could lead to improved post-program outcomes. For this line of analysis, we will compare the net impacts of students designated for centers in which the similarity of the gender and ethnicity of students and staff is high with the net impact of students and staff in centers in which similarity is low.

As a second example, we will examine the extent to which differences in OA counselors' knowledge about the centers for which they recruit lead to variation in impacts. OA counselors with ample information about the centers (obtained through center visits, brochures, and so forth) may provide a more realistic picture of center life to those youth they recruit than OA counselors with less information can. Youths with accurate information about the centers to which they are assigned might have realistic program expectations, which might help them adjust to center life and increase the length of their stay on center. In this analysis, we will examine net impacts for subgroups of students with the subgroups defined in terms of the level of knowledge of the OA counselors who recruited the youths.

APPENDIX A

THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA COLLECTION FOR THE PROCESS ANALYSIS

Five data collection activities were undertaken to meet the objectives of the process analysis:

1. A telephone survey of outreach and admissions (OA) counselors nationwide
2. In-depth site visits to a sample of 23 Job Corps centers
3. Interviews with managers of OA and placement agencies that serve these 23 centers
4. A mail survey of all Job Corps centers
5. Collecting data from automated Job Corps administrative records on student characteristics and program experiences

This appendix discusses in detail the design and implementation of the process analysis data collection effort. In the following sections, each data collection activity is discussed in turn.

A. TELEPHONE SURVEY OF OA COUNSELORS

A telephone survey of OA counselors was conducted to address several process analysis objectives. First, the data were used to provide a comprehensive understanding of the outreach and admissions practices followed by OA counselors in recruiting and screening students for Job Corps. Second, it documented how recent changes in Job Corps policy affected the recruitment and screening process and identified any effects of random selection on the OA process. Finally, it provided data that will be used to develop variables for the subgroup impact analysis to assess whether OA practices affect the likelihood that eligible applicants enroll in, and stay in, Job Corps. Below we describe the survey content, the selection of the sample of OA counselors to interview, survey implementation, and the weights used in the analysis of the telephone survey data.

1. Content of OA Counselor Telephone Survey

To meet the multiple data objectives described above, the telephone survey of OA counselors was designed to collect information on several topic areas. In developing specific questions, we used closed-ended answer categories whenever possible to ensure the comparability of data among respondents. The major topic areas in the OA survey included counselor experience in Job Corps and scope of recruitment activity (goals and centers for which they recruit); outreach activities conducted; admissions counseling activities and the application process; the counselor's role in making center assignments and any contact with students after arrival; the effects of random selection on counselor activities and referral services to control group members; and general background characteristics of the counselor.

2. Selection of OA Counselors

The sample frame for the OA telephone survey is comprised of all OA agency offices nationwide that were operating during the period of intake for the impact evaluation. In November 1995, we identified all of the distinct OA offices that were responsible for recruiting any of the program or control group members included in the National Job Corps Study.[1] Distinct OA offices were identified based on the OA office identification code on the ETA-652 program application forms sent to MPR as part of the random assignment process. For the most part, this was a straightforward process, as a given office identification code generally corresponded to a single office location. In a few cases, however, the OA contractor used a single identification code to represent multiple office locations. In such situations, we obtained the addresses of all of the individual offices from the OA contractor. This process resulted in identifying 556 distinct OA offices in the contiguous 48 states, representing over 900 OA counselors.

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[1] Due to the scheduling requirements of the OA counselor survey, we included all OA offices that recruited a sample member who went through the random selection process prior to October 1, 1995. Because about 80 percent of the over 14,000 youths who were ultimately included in the research sample had gone through the random selection process by this time, the sample frame should cover virtually all OA offices. However, it is possible that the sample frame of OA offices could omit some very small offices that only recruited a few Job Corps applicants.

We then grouped all research sample members--program research and control group members--into strata defined by each of the 556 identified OA offices to which they applied. For youths who applied to Job Corps through an office that shared its identification code with other offices, we assumed that sample members in the strata applied to the closest OA office. We then randomly selected one sample member from each of these OA agency office strata. For each randomly selected research sample member, we included in the survey sample the OA counselor who recruited that youth.[2]

3. Implementation of the OA Counselor Telephone Survey

The telephone interviews of OA counselors were conducted between December 1995 and March 1996. If the sampled counselor was no longer employed, or the OA contractor had changed, we asked the supervisor/manager for the name of the person(s) who was responsible for the sampled counselor's geographical area and interviewed that person or persons.

In administering the survey, we also discovered two types of problems with the underlying sample frame. First, we found that in some instances the same OA counselor was sampled multiple times under different office identification codes, as some counselors are assigned to more than one office/area. In these cases, we only repeated the questions concerning the specific recruitment area, and did not repeat all of the other questions about their normal OA activities. Second, as indicated above, there were duplicate office identification codes because some OA contractors have multiple offices, but their counselors use a single office code. As a result of these problems, we had to be particularly careful in linking counselors' responses to specific OA offices.

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[2] For the OA identification codes used for multiple office locations, we first randomly selected three research sample members from each of the distinct office addresses to ensure there would be a high probability that at least one of the selected youths actually applied to that office location. We then randomly ordered the three youths, determined whether the screeners who recruited the youths had office addresses that corresponded to the correct office location, and included the first screener with the correct address in the sample frame for the OA survey.

We ultimately completed telephone surveys with 463 OA counselors, which accounted for 536 of the 556 sampled office identification codes. There were 6 refusals and 14 OA counselor positions were vacant. Thus, of the 556 sampled office identification codes, we obtained completed interviews that represent the OA counselor activities and practices for 96.4 percent of all office codes. This high response rate is important for ensuring that the descriptive findings from the survey can be interpreted as accurately reflecting overall OA counselor practices at the time of the National Job Corps Study. Moreover, this high response rate indicates that it will be possible to link the characteristics and activities of OA counselors to the research sample members they served for the subgroup impact analysis with minor sample loss due to OA counselor nonresponse.

4. Sample Weights for the Analysis of OA Counselor Survey Data

The findings using the OA counselor telephone survey data presented in Chapter III of this report were constructed using weighted data in order to represent the experiences of a typical Job Corps applicant with an OA counselor. Thus, in the construction of summary measures, larger weights were given to OA counselors in OA offices that served more research sample members than to OA counselors in OA offices that served fewer research sample members. In addition, we assumed that OA counselor practices are similar for all counselors within the same office.

We assigned a weight to a counselor to be equal to the number of program research and control group members who were recruited by the OA office associated with that counselor.[3,4] To represent

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[3] If the sampled counselor was associated with more than one OA office, the weight for that counselor is the sum of the number of youths recruited by each office. In some instances, the sampled counselor who left his or her position was replaced by more than one counselor. In this case, (continued...)

nonrespondent OA offices, we increased the weights proportionately for those respondent offices employed by the same contractor.

B. CENTER VISITS

Another major data collection activity for the process analysis involved in-depth site visits to a sample of 23 Job Corps centers. These visits allowed us to collect comprehensive data from program staff and students about the effectiveness of various aspects of the program. These subjective opinions were used to enrich our understanding of Job Corps program operations and to generate hypotheses about factors likely to affect program impacts.

This three-part section describes the design of the site visits. In the first section, we describe the content of the interview guides and focus group protocols. In the second section, we discuss the methodology used to select the sites. Finally, we discuss the implementation of the site visits.

1. Interview Guides and Focus Group Protocols for Site Visits

To collect the type and quantity of information required to fully meet the objectives of the in-depth site visits to Job Corps centers, the design called for a series of interviews and focus group meetings, along with observations of several different activities. This data collection effort allowed us to learn about center practices, goals, and culture.

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[3](...continued)
each new counselor associated with the office was allocated an equal share of the total number of youths recruited by that office.

[4] In the instances where there was a contractor change, the counselor(s) associated with the new OA office inherited research sample members recruited by the counselor(s) affiliated with the corresponding old OA office.

The major site visit activities were as follows:

- ***Interviews with the Center Director.*** These interviews collected information on center history, staff recruitment, training, and communications, center capacity utilization, center external relations, the performance management system, and factors influencing student length of stay.

- ***Interviews with Academic Teachers and Vocational Instructors.*** Discussions were held about course offerings, educational facilities, staffing, organization, and student orientation, assessment, testing, program assignment, and advancement.

- ***Interviews with Residential Living Staff.*** These interviews collected information on the RA role in dormitory life, student counseling, methods that are used to help new students adjust to center life, the behavior management system, SSTs, and P/PEPs.

- ***Interviews with Counselors.*** Counselors were asked questions about counseling services provided on center, how they are assigned students, methods they use to identify at-risk students and deal with student problems, the behavioral management system, and the P/PEP process.

- ***Interviews with Center Security Staff.*** Topics included center discipline, rules, safety and security.

- ***Interviews with Health Staff.*** Data were collected on the health care staff, the health service orientation program, and the provision of health care both on and off center.

- ***Interviews with Recreation Staff.*** Topics included the extent of the recreation program offerings on and off center, and how the recreation program is used to enhance Job Corps values and encourage positive student behavior.

- ***Focus Group Meetings with Students at Different Stages of the Program.*** Two types of student focus groups were convened to obtain information from a variety of different perspectives. One focus group included about eight current students selected by program staff who had been on center from one to two months. The second focus group included about eight students who had been on center for at least five months. The first student focus group was designed to discuss issues that affect the enrollment decision, experiences with OA counselors, program expectations, initial experiences and selecting a trade. The second meeting focused on overall program experiences and expectations regarding completing their trade and plans after leaving the center.

- ***Focus Group Meetings with Center Staff.*** Focus group meetings were held with approximately eight center staff involved in different aspects of center operations. These open-ended meetings obtained staff views and opinions about the effectiveness of various program components that supplement the data gathered from the more standardized interviews with center staff.

- ***Observations of Center Activities.*** These observations included arrival of new students, orientation sessions, academic classes, vocational classes, social skills training sessions, P/PEPS, student government meetings, center review boards, and center staff meetings
- ***Conducting Value of Output Studies and Administering Cost Data Protocols for the Benefit-Cost Analysis.***[5]

We developed a total of 30 interview/monitoring guides for conducting these site visit data collection activities.[6] Each interview guide was designed to include numerous open-ended questions to obtain information on significant aspects of center operations in each major topic area. In addition, we included many questions that cut across topical areas to focus on those aspects of center operations that tend to determine the "philosophy, atmosphere, and culture" of the center. For example, within each module we explore numerous issues, including:

- The relationships between center staff and students
- The degree to which center staff have a common vision of the "goals" of the program
- The quality of the center's facilities and equipment
- The involvement of all center staff in center administration and the disciplinary system
- The extent to which students are involved in decision making and center operations
- The degree to which operations are integrated into a single service delivery program at the center
- The relationships of the center to the regional office and the National Office
- The integration of center operations with outreach and screening activities, placement services, and the broader community

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[5] For additional information on the design and implementation of the data collection plan for this component of the site visit, see McConnell (1998).

[6] The interview guides for the center site visits were pilot tested in late 1994 and early 1995 in two centers. Revisions to the interview guides were made based on the results of the pilot test and submitted to DOL and OMB for review and approval.

2. Selection of Centers for Site Visits

The sample design for the center site visits called for randomly selecting 23 centers from among all centers in the contiguous 48 states that were included in the impact study. As a result, we excluded from consideration centers in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, as well as Indypendence and Pivot Job Corps Centers.[7] We also excluded New Orleans JCC and Shreveport JCC because of major construction activity that was ongoing during the site visit data collection period.

To select the sample of centers for the site visits, we used a stratified systematic random sampling approach. This approach was implemented in three stages. In the first stage, centers were stratified into the following three categories on the basis of the type of center contractor and the extent to which the center served nonresidential students:

1. Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) centers
2. Job Corps centers operated by private contractors that are predominantly residential centers
3. Job Corps centers operated by private contractors that serve a significant number of nonresidential students

The percentage of a center's capacity that was nonresidential was used to classify each privately operated center as predominantly residential or as serving a significant number of nonresidential students. A center was classified as serving a significant number of nonresidential students if its nonresidential capacity comprised more than 20 percent of its total capacity.[8]

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[7] Indypendence and Pivot Job Corps centers were excluded from the evaluation because the eligibility criteria for entrance into these special programs differ from the regular Job Corps eligibility requirements, and because the services provided by these programs differ substantially from those provided by the regular Job Corps program.

[8] One attractive feature of this criterion is that centers classified as significantly nonresidential comprise approximately 20 percent of the total student capacity of all Job Corps centers, and Job (continued...)

In the second stage, we selected the number of site visits to conduct within a stratum to be proportional to the share of student capacity in the stratum to the total Job Corps student capacity across all strata. This approach ensured that this stratified sample characterized the centers that a "typical" Job Corps participant attended. This resulted in allocating site visits to 5 CCCs, 13 privately operated, predominantly residential centers, and 5 privately operated, significantly nonresidential centers. This allocation of the 23 site visits overrepresented CCC centers, slightly overrepresented significantly nonresidential centers and underrepresented primarily residential private centers relative to the proportion of students served in such centers nationwide. Given the study objectives related to understanding CCCs versus contract centers and of the nonresidential component, however, it was important that the site visit sample include a sufficient number of CCCs and significantly nonresidential centers.

In the third stage, we selected the sample of centers for site visits within each stratum. To ensure variation in center characteristics, a systematic random sampling procedure was used to select the specific centers within each stratum. Among CCCs, centers were first ordered according to the federal operating agency.[9] For the two types of centers operated by private contractors, centers were first ordered by region. Within each primary ordering, centers were ordered on the basis of the ranking of the center as determined by the Job Corps performance measurement system during program year (PY) 1994 to ensure the centers visited represented a wide range of measured performance. Within each ordering, centers were then selected randomly with a probability

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[8] (...continued)
Corps is authorized to serve approximately 20 percent of its students in a nonresidential capacity.

[9] CCCs are operated by four agencies within the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior.

proportional to the size of the center, as measured by student capacity. The center selection process was conducted in July 1995 for site visits to be conducted throughout 1996.

Table A.1 presents the 23 centers that were selected using this systematic random sampling technique.[10] Following the geographic location information provided in the first four columns of this exhibit, we show the center type, the actual performance measurement system (PMS) ranking of the center at that time, and the calendar quarter in which we planned to conduct the site visit.[11] The center type column indicates whether the center is a CCC, a privately operated primarily residential (PR) center, or a privately operated significantly nonresidential (SNR) center. The ranking of the centers selected range from a high of 5 to a low of 93, with most of the higher-ranking centers located in the western region, which is consistent with the historical geographical distribution of performance of all Job Corps centers.

3. Implementation of Site Visits

Site visits were conducted by a large number of staff at Battelle, DIR, and MPR. To ensure that procedures were implemented consistently across centers, all site visit staff on the project team participated in a two-day training that covered site visit preparation activities as well as the conduct of the site visits.

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[10] We examined Student Pay and Allowance Management Information System (SPAMIS) data for the 23 centers and found that they were generally quite representative of all centers nationwide. The only small differences identified were that (1) the selected centers offered slightly more training in construction trades than the typical center, and (2) the sample included relatively more centers operated by a particular specific private contractor. Overall, however, the set of sites met our objective of being broadly representative of the Job Corps program as it operated at the time of the National Job Corps Study.

[11] The design for the benefit-cost analysis required that random samples of work projects be assessed during the site visits. In addition, we wanted to spread our visits evenly throughout the year to examine how center operations differ by season. Consequently, we randomly assigned each site visit to a calendar quarter with equal probability (that is, 25 percent each).

TABLE A.1

JOB CORPS CENTERS SELECTED FOR SITE VISITS

Center Name	City	State	Region	Center Type	PMS Rank	Planned Visit
Westover	Chicopee	MA	1	PR	60	96Q3
Edison	Edison	NJ	2	PR	89	96Q1
Iroquois	Medina	NY	2	CCC	83	96Q2
Charleston	Charleston	WV	3	PR	73	96Q4
Keystone	Drums	PA	3	PR	49	96Q3
Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	PA	3	SNR	35	96Q2
Earle Clements	Morganfield	KY	4	PR	86	96Q2
Kittrell	Kittrell	NC	4	PR	72	96Q1
Lyndon B. Johnson	Franklin	NC	4	CCC	69	96Q3
Miami	Miami	FL	4	SNR	93	96Q3
Mississippi	Crystal Springs	MS	4	PR	93	96Q4
Blackwell	Laona	WI	5	CCC	58	96Q3
Dayton	Dayton	OH	5	PR	78	96Q2
Albuquerque	Albuquerque	NM	6	SNR	39	96Q4
Gary	San Marcos	TX	6	PR	55	96Q2
Tulsa	Tulsa	OK	6	PR	53	96Q4
Flint Hills	Manhattan	KS	7	PR	42	96Q2
Clearfield	Clearfield	UT	8	PR	47	96Q4
Weber Basin	Ogden	UT	8	CCC	8	96Q3
San Jose	San Jose	CA	9	SNR	5	96Q1
Phoenix	Phoenix	AZ	9	SNR	24	96Q1
Curlew	Wauconda	WA	10	CCC	13	96Q1
Tongue Point	Astoria	OR	10	PR	14	96Q3

The complexity of the site visit data collection effort required extensive preparation and planning before the site visits. Prior to conducting each site visit, site visitors obtained extensive background materials for the visit and worked with center staff to develop a schedule of interviews with staff to administer the interview guidelines outlined above. The background materials were collected to enable staff to make the best use of the limited amount of time available at each center. The background materials included information on key center personnel, center characteristics gathered from Job Corps administrative records (for example, student characteristics, on board strength, VST plans), and the center mail survey (if completed before the visit). In addition, we designed 17 tables to obtain pre-site visit information on numerous center activities needed for the benefit-cost analysis.

The site visits were conducted by teams of two staff members and lasted from three to five days as planned, depending on the size and structure of the center. Because of the wide range of structured and unstructured data collection and observational activities, the site visit team was generally on center throughout the day and during some evenings as well. Although site visit staff used the interview guides to focus the discussion, they were also encouraged to explore any relevant topics that arose during an interview.

Overall, the site visits were conducted as planned, with all of the site visits except two being completed during 1996 in the planned calendar quarter.[12] This was accomplished with the help and cooperation of numerous program staff, and the collection of activities provided the research team with a comprehensive perspective of all Job Corps operations. Although we made every effort to schedule the visits so that we minimized inconvenience to the center, in some cases our visits coincided with events or activities that were not the typical activities of an ongoing center, but that provided insights into special circumstances. For example, a couple of visits occurred soon after a new contractor took over the center, one visit occurred while a low-performing center was changing its teacher contract and in a major staffing transition, and one visit to a large center occurred while it was in the middle of operation "fast track" to fill the center and was receiving 250 new students with each input. Each of these special circumstances affected the staff and student attitudes about the Job Corps program, as well as the detail and focus of the data that could be obtained during the visit. Moreover, some of the centers visited were in the middle of a procurement process, which required that site visitors carefully explain the purpose of our visits to alleviate staff concerns that the information we obtained might be used as input to their bid to continue as center operator. Although such situations added to the stress and strain of operating a center and affected the site visit data collection effort somewhat, they also enabled us to obtain valuable insights into activities surrounding center transitions.

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[12] The visit to the Albuquerque JCC was delayed until January 1997 to accommodate a change in contractors, and we rescheduled the visit to the Charleston JCC to January 1997 to accommodate a planned center relocation. However, because the move to the new center was also delayed, we ultimately conducted the center visit in January 1997 at the old location.

C. INTERVIEWS WITH MANAGERS OF LINKED OA AND PLACEMENT AGENCIES

To acquire a full picture of the 23 centers selected for the site visits, we conducted telephone interviews with an OA office manager and a placement office manager that served each of these selected centers. We chose to interview the managers in these offices because they were most likely to be familiar both with staff practices at the operational level and with agencywide policies and initiatives.

Below, we provide additional details about the content of these surveys, the selection of the sample of managers to interview, and our experiences in conducting the interviews with the office managers of the selected agencies.

1. Content of Linked OA&P Office Manager Surveys

The interview for the OA office manager focused on similar issues to the OA counselor interview described earlier, although more detailed information was collected during the OA manager interview. In addition, the interview included questions on agencywide issues of which individual counselors might not be aware. For example, the OA manager interview collected data on budgets for advertising and other items, and on the organization and staffing of OA offices.

The discussions with the manager of the placement agency focused primarily on the extent to which the contractor coordinated activities with the linked center, the type of linkages with various employers, the types and timing of services provided to students after their departure from the center, the types of procedures used to follow up with youths who do not appear at the placement agency, the characteristics of students that impact placement activities, and the processes used to verify reported placements. We were interested also in any impacts that the placement performance standards had on center or placement contractor operations. Because the center placement standards were changed to include all students rather than only relatively long-term stayers, it was important to collect data on how these standards affected center and placement contractor operations.

2. Selection of Linked OA&P Contractors

The OA office manager to be interviewed for the linked center was randomly selected with probability proportional to the number of students who attended the center that were recruited and screened by the OA office. Thus, the manager was selected to provide information on the OA experiences of a typical student served by the center. The selection process was conducted in the following three-stages: (1) we arrayed all PY 1994 enrollees who attended each of the 23 centers to be visited, (2) we randomly selected one enrollee at each center, and (3) we conducted the OA office manager interview with the manager of the office that recruited the selected student to Job Corps.

This resulted in a representative sample of OA agencies that served the centers selected for the site visits.

A similar process was followed for selecting the linked placement contractor office manager, except that it was applied to students who *terminated* from Job Corps during PY 1994. For each of the 23 centers, we generated a list of all terminees from the center in PY 1994 and recorded the initial six-digit placement agency code assigned for each terminee in SPAMIS. In developing this list, we excluded students who were assigned a placement agency outside of the center's region. From this list we randomly selected one terminee from each center, retrieved the placement agency ID code, and interviewed the office manager of the placement agency that was assigned to provide placement services to that terminee. The resulting sample is equivalent to a simple random sample of placement agencies with probability proportional to size as measured by number of terminees assigned to each agency.

3. Implementation of Linked OA&P Manager Surveys

Table A.2 displays the 23 centers selected for site visits, along with the linked OA contractor and placement contractor selected to be interviewed for the OA manager survey and the placement manager survey, respectively. As shown in the exhibit, one OA contractor (North Carolina Human Resources) was selected for two of the centers (Kittrell JCC and Lyndon B. Johnson JCC) and two of the placement contractors were selected twice (Virginia Job Corps Placement Services, for both Keystone JCC and Charleston JCC; and Ohio DESI for both Dayton JCC and Blackwell JCC). In these instances, we conducted a single telephone interview with the appropriate manager, and included the specific questions for both linked centers in the single interview. It should also be noticed that three contractors (Region 4 Del-Jen, Pennsylvania DESI and Washington Del-Jen) were selected as an OA contractor for one center visit and as a placement contractor for a different center

TABLE A.2

OA&P CONTRACTORS LINKED TO 23 CENTERS SELECTED FOR SITE VISITS

Region	Center	OA Contractor	Placement Contractor
1	Westover	Penobscot JCC	Westover JCC
2	Edison	Edison JCC	Edison JCC
2	Iroquois	South Bronx JCC	Satellite Services
3	Charleston	West Virginia DESI	Virginia JC Placement
3	Keystone	Pennsylvania DESI	Virginia JC Placement
3	Pittsburgh	Virginia DESI	Pennsylvania DESI
4	Earle C. Clements	Clements JCC	South Carolina ES
4	Kittrell	North Carolina Human Resources	Kittrell JCC
4	Lyndon B. Johnson	North Carolina Human Resources	Region 4 DEL-JEN
4	Miami	Region 4 DEL-JEN	Miami JCC
4	Mississippi	Mississippi ES	Mississippi ES
5	Blackwell	Illinois DEL-JEN	Ohio DESI
5	Dayton	Ohio DESI	Ohio DESI
6	Albuquerque	New Mexico Teledyne	New Mexico Teledyne
6	Gary	Texas Employment Commission (ES)	Texas Employment Commission (ES)
6	Tulsa	Arkansas ES	Louisiana ES
7	Flint Hills	Flint Hills JCC	Missouri ES
8	Clearfield	Nebraska DESI	Colorado DEL-JEN
8	Weber Basin	Wyoming DEL-JEN	Utah DESI
9	San Jose	California WICS	San Jose JCC
9	Phoenix	Phoenix JCC	Inland Empire JCC
10	Curlew	Washington DEL-JEN	Oregon MTC
10	Tongue Point	Idaho DEL-JEN	Washington DEL-JEN

visit. In such cases, we conducted the manager interviews as usual, but mentioned that they would be contacted later to ask about their OA or placement experiences with the other linked center. The interviews with the OA&P managers were conducted by telephone, and usually within a month after the site visit to the center.

The major problem we faced in implementing the OA and placement manager interviews was contractor change, particularly for placement agencies. Six of the 23 placement contractors selected changed from the time they were selected to the time of the interview.[13] These changes in contractors resulted in two additional duplicate placement agencies (Satellite Services and Kittrell JCC), thus reducing the number of distinct placement agencies from 23 to 19. In addition, one OA contractor changed, as ITT replaced Penobscot JCC as the OA contractor for Westover JCC. Thus, the number of distinct OA agencies for the survey was 22.

We conducted interviews with all 22 OA managers selected for the survey whose agency provided OA services to students who attended one of the 23 Job Corps centers visited. We also completed interviews with 18 of the 19 managers of distinct placement agencies. The manager for the Missouri ES placement contract refused to participate in the survey, consistent with their agency's general protest of the overall study. Both the OA and the placement manager interviews were quite lengthy and detailed, typically requiring from 1.5 to 2.0 hours to complete.

D. MAIL SURVEY OF JOB CORPS CENTERS

A mail survey of all Job Corps centers supplemented the more detailed qualitative information obtained from the center site visits with summary information about all centers. The data collected through this survey provides comparable measures of key center characteristics that will be used in the subgroup and component impact analyses. Below, we describe the content of the mail survey and the implementation of the survey.

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[13] Westover JCC was replaced by the Grafton office of ITT. Edison JCC was replaced by the Edison office of ITT. South Carolina ES and Mississippi ES were both replaced by Satellite Services (Atlanta). Region 4 DEL-JEN was replaced by Kittrell JCC, and Louisiana ES was replaced by New Orleans JCC.

1. Content of the Mail Survey

The mail survey of all Job Corps centers provided a unique opportunity to collect nationwide information about the characteristics of centers and to identify the extent of variation in key characteristics across centers. The general topic areas for the mail survey of Job Corps contractors overlapped greatly with the topic areas for the site-visit interview guides for Job Corps centers described above. However, the range of issues that could be reliably covered in a self-administered mail survey is more limited, because the data elements must be sufficiently quantifiable and unambiguous to be obtained without direct interaction between the respondent and an interviewer and because the overall length of the survey instrument must be reasonable to avoid excessive respondent burden.

The center mail survey obtained detailed information that will be needed to support key component and subgroup impact issues. As a result, in addition to obtaining a broad picture of center operations, the mail survey was designed to collect as much detail as possible on the characteristics of centers that are likely to affect whether a student arrives on center, length of stay, student vocational choices, and vocational completion. The major topic areas in the mail survey include: center contractor and related OA&P contracts; relationship and experiences with OA contractors that serve center; pre-arrival contacts with students and the center orientation program; student class schedules; OEP and practices related to selecting/changing vocational training programs; academic program; center residential living; and the role/impacts of the Job Corps

Performance Measurement System (PMS), now known as the Outcome Measurement System (OMS).

2. Implementation of the Mail Survey

The mail survey was distributed to Job Corps center directors during the last quarter of 1995, which was when a large percentage of program group members were enrolled in Job Corps. The survey was sent to center directors of all 110 Job Corps centers--including centers in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico that were not included in the site visits--so that we would be able to describe the entire Job Corps program with the mail survey data.[14]

The majority of centers returned the surveys within approximately three months. Center directors who did not return the mail survey on a timely basis were contacted and encouraged to complete the survey. This schedule resulted in obtaining the mail survey data before most site visits, which provided valuable background data for the site visit team. Using these normal follow-up methods, we were able to obtain completed surveys from 108 of the 110 centers, for an initial response rate of 98.2 percent. Moreover, with the assistance of the Job Corps National Office, we ultimately received the mail surveys from the other two centers. Thus, the final response rate for the mail survey was 100 percent. The quality of the data is reasonably high and there was relatively little item nonresponse.

It is important to note that the analysis of the center mail survey data focuses on the Job Corps program as a whole and presents information on the characteristics of a "typical center." This is because the results are based on data for the entire population of centers, and thus, center characteristics are measured with no sampling error. Thus, there are no statistical inferences to be drawn from these data. As such, we do not perform statistical tests of differences between the characteristics of centers, since any differences are in fact actual differences in the population of centers.

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[14] A draft mail survey was sent to two center directors to be pilot tested.

E. JOB CORPS ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

As indicated in Chapter II, to provide a picture of the characteristics of students as they enter Job Corps and of any major differences in student background characteristics across key program components, data were obtained from SPAMIS for 69,118 students who terminated from Job Corps during calendar year 1996. This corresponds to the time period of the center site visits, as well as the time when most students who enrolled in the National Job Corps Study and who entered Job Corps were leaving the program. As such, these data should provide an accurate picture of the types of students served in Job Corps at the time the National Job Corps Study was conducted.

The SPAMIS data included in the process analysis include student background characteristics such as age, race, sex, education level (for example, highest grade completed, whether have GED/high school diploma at entry), academic ability (based on program test scores), and participation in vocational training programs. These data will be combined with information about the centers the youths attended--region, CCC or contract center, primarily residential or significantly nonresidential center--to provide a detailed picture of the types of youth who enroll in different centers and regions, and the vocational programs to which they are assigned. Other SPAMIS data for youth included in the treatment group, including information about services received, whether they complete their vocational training, and participation in advanced programs and overall program length of stay, will be obtained as part of the data collection for the process analysis for use in the component and subgroup impact analysis.

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

TABLE B.1

NUMBER OF AGENCIES AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECRUITED, BY AGENCY TYPE AND REGION

	Contractor Type			
	Overall	Employment Service and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Number of Agencies				
Region 1	3	0	3	0
Region 2	9	1	2	6
Region 3	11	1	3	7
Region 4	17	6	9	2
Region 5	9	0	3	6
Region 6	11	2	7	2
Region 7/8	11	3	2	6
Region 9	11	1	9	1
Region 10	4	0	0	4
Total	86	14	35	37
Percentage of Students Recruited				
Region 1	4	0	4	0
Region 2	7	0	5	2
Region 3	13	1	2	10
Region 4	23	12	6	5
Region 5	10	0	2	8
Region 6	15	9	5	1
Region 7/8	13	5	1	7
Region 9	9	<1	5	4
Region 10	5	1	0	4
Total	100	29	30	41

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.2

NUMBER OF CENTERS, BY CENTER TYPE, REGION, AND LOCATION

			Contract		
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential	Total Contract
By Region					
1	4	0	4	0	4
2	11	2	7	2	9
3	12	2	8	2	8
4	22	7	11	4	15
5	11	2	6	3	9
6	15	3	7	5	12
7/8	14	7	5	2	7
9	9	0	3	6	9
10	12	7	3	2	5
Total	110	30	54	26	80
By Location					
Inner City	18	0	5	13	18
Urban	29	2	16	11	29
Suburban	38	7	29	2	38
Rural	25	21	4	0	25

SOURCE: SPAMIS data for Program Year 1995.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.3

NUMBER OF PLACEMENT AGENCIES, BY AGENCY TYPE AND REGION

	Contractor Type			
	Overall	Employment Service and Other State/Local Government Agencies	Job Corps Center Operators	Other Private Contractors and Nonprofit Agencies
Number of Placement Agencies				
Region 1	3	0	0	3
Region 2	6	1	2	3
Region 3	6	0	3	3
Region 4	15	4	8	3
Region 5	6	0	2	4
Region 6	10	2	7	1
Region 7/8	11	3	2	6
Region 9	12	1	10	1
Region 10	4	0	0	4
Total	76	11	34	31

SOURCE: SPAMIS data for Program Year 1995.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.4

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND JOB EXPERIENCE OF OA COUNSELORS, BY REGION

(Percentage of Students Recruited by a Counselor with the Indicated Attribute)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Female	66	58	57	64	77	69	58	93	56	66
White	62	10	18	35	39	27	62	21	80	36
Black	18	90	65	57	51	44	24	31	4	47
Hispanic	20	0	10	7	8	26	9	40	11	14
Employed in Current Position as OA Counselor for (in Years)										
Less than 1	81	38	63	28	52	31	12	15	46	36
1 to 2	19	15	26	25	18	10	36	30	54	24
3 to 5	0	47	0	15	9	24	21	30	0	17
More than 5	0	0	11	32	22	36	33	26	0	23
Worked for Job Corps in Other Capacity	44	25	37	17	30	18	23	46	38	27

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.5

ATTRIBUTES OF OA COUNSELORS' JOBS, BY REGION

(Percentage of Students Recruited by a Counselor with the Indicated Job Attribute)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Method of Basic Compensation										
Salary	100	89	87	86	79	84	67	96	92	85
Hourly wage	0	11	12	14	14	15	33	4	8	14
Categories of Students Recruited										
All categories	27	51	61	39	39	42	47	22	47	42
Male and female residential students only	55	29	35	60	36	50	51	34	53	46
Special groups only (only females, only nonresidential students)	18	20	5	1	25	8	3	44	0	11
Allocation of Time										
Percentage of time on										
Outreach	27	33	24	26	31	26	32	27	23	28
Admissions	70	58	75	63	59	63	53	56	65	62
Other	3	9	1	11	10	11	15	17	12	10

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.6

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES OF OA COUNSELORS, BY REGION

(Percentage of Students Recruited by a Counselor with the Indicated Goal or Incentive)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Direct Contacts										
Home Visits for Outreach Purposes										
Percentage conducting visits	78	46	65	80	51	79	57	28	17	62
Average number conducted in the past 12 months	213	63	52	73	56	89	45	6	4	72
Arranging or Conducting Center Tours										
Percentage who arrange or conduct center tours	86	96	70	54	80	70	85	62	98	72
Average number of center tours in the past 12 months	84	14	17	33	22	104	31	45	23	41
Contacts with Groups That Might Refer Students										
Schools										
Any contact in the past 12 months	100	89	100	98	100	99	100	80	100	97
In-person presentation	89	100	90	94	85	86	91	99	100	92
Community-Based Organizations										
Any contact in the past 12 months	100	91	96	94	98	94	90	80	94	93
In-person presentation	86	100	86	86	95	85	86	84	94	88
Courts or Law Enforcement Agencies										
Any contact in the past 12 months	100	89	88	96	98	99	88	76	100	93
In-person presentation	78	77	84	60	45	40	82	68	90	65
Welfare Agencies										
Any contact in the past 12 months	93	86	100	92	88	95	98	70	95	92
In-person presentation	71	89	62	67	77	58	60	71	73	67
Other Social Service Agencies										
Any contact in the past 12 months	78	100	92	86	99	93	90	75	81	89
In-person presentation	72	67	95	69	85	62	86	92	89	78

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.7

OA COUNSELORS' PERCEPTIONS AND STUDENTS' REPORTS ABOUT HOW APPLICANTS HEAR ABOUT JOB CORPS, BY REGION

(Percentage of Applicants Recruited by OA Counselor with the Indicated Attribute)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
OA Counselors' Estimates of the Percentages of All Applicants Who Heard About Job Corps from										
One of the referral sources	48	28	39	32	36	37	39	32	39	36
Family or friends or saw or heard an advertisement (walk-in)	27	51	27	52	44	47	43	59	41	45
An outreach function like a job fair workshop or school activity	26	21	35	16	19	17	17	9	20	19
How Students Reported They First Heard About Job Corps										
Parents, relative, or friends	61	67	73	68	67	66	66	67	69	68
Media or mail	25	18	14	19	21	19	12	23	14	18
School or school counselor	6	7	5	5	3	4	6	4	9	5
Welfare office	5	4	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3
Employment service	1	1	1	2	1	4	5	1	1	2
Other	2	3	3	5	4	4	8	3	5	4
OA counselor	3	3	2	4	2	4	6	2	3	3

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey; National Job Corps Study Baseline Interview.

NOTE: Figures sum to more than 100 because some respondents reporting "OA counselor" also reported school, welfare office, employment service, or other. The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.8

FACTORS USED IN ASSESSING APPLICANTS' SUITABILITY FOR JOB CORPS, BY REGION
(Percentage of Job Corps Students Recruited by an OA Counselor Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Uses Educational Objectives to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	100	98	98	96	90	97	85	95	100	95
Views Having GED as Good Evidence of Suitability for Job Corps	91	86	95	87	86	92	77	92	93	88
Uses Vocational Objectives to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	83	98	89	90	68	89	76	96	90	86
Views Vocational Objectives Matched with Job Corps Offerings as Evidence of Suitability for Job Corps	71	81	76	69	56	69	55	59	88	68
Views Unrealistic Vocational Goals as Evidence of Unsuitability for Job Corps	24	34	26	26	18	25	37	27	38	28
Uses Observations of Behavior During Application to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	76	71	95	95	87	90	95	96	91	91
Uses Observations of Attitudes to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	84	98	53	80	78	84	81	81	60	77
Uses Prior School or Work Experiences to Assess Suitability for Job Corps	7	11	30	37	26	40	24	14	41	28

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.9

OA COUNSELORS' APPROACHES TO ASSESSING DRUG USE AND DETERMINING PRIOR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, BY REGION

(Percentage of Applicants Screened by an OA Counselor Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Assessing Drug Use										
Determining for All Applicants Whether Drug Free	88	100	94	91	98	97	94	77	98	93
Using Applicant Self-Report	69	65	90	53	66	81	57	23	81	64
Using Own Observations of the Applicant During the Application Process	31	54	37	68	58	61	76	65	70	60
Requiring a Drug Test	3	0	0	1	0	4	16	5	0	3
Determining Involvement with the Criminal Justice System										
Require Criminal Justice Records for All Applicants	100	100	95	98	100	98	98	72	98	96
Counselor Requests Records	74	10	67	69	60	44	38	80	40	55
Counselor Requires Applicant to Obtain Records	0	66	18	2	4	6	2	0	12	10
Counselor Both Requests and Requires Records	26	25	14	30	37	50	60	20	48	35

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.9

OA COUNSELORS' APPROACHES TO ASSESSING DRUG USE AND DETERMINING PRIOR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, BY REGION
(Percentage of Applicants Screened by an OA Counselor Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Assessing Drug Use										
Determining for All Applicants Whether Drug Free	88	100	94	91	98	97	94	77	98	93
Using Applicant Self-Report	69	65	90	53	66	81	57	23	81	64
Using Own Observations of the Applicant During the Application Process	31	54	37	68	58	61	76	65	70	60
Requiring a Drug Test	3	0	0	1	0	4	16	5	0	3
Determining Involvement with the Criminal Justice System										
Require Criminal Justice Records for All Applicants	100	100	95	98	100	98	98	72	98	96
Counselor Requests Records	74	10	67	69	60	44	38	80	40	55
Counselor Requires Applicant to Obtain Records	0	66	18	2	4	6	2	0	12	10
Counselor Both Requests and Requires Records	26	25	14	30	37	50	60	20	48	35

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.10

DISTANCE FROM STUDENTS' HOMES TO CENTERS ATTENDED, BY REGION

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Mean Distance from Home to Center	105	107	141	316	172	189	323	128	205	213
Median Distance from Home to Center Percentage of Students Attending Centers	82	91	108	231	156	154	167	0	132	134
Percentage of Students Attending Centers										
Less than 100 miles from home	56	50	41	27	40	40	36	63	32	40
100 to 200 miles from home	30	34	30	17	16	19	15	9	40	21
More than 200 miles from home	14	15	28	57	44	41	49	28	28	39
Percentage of Students Attending a Center in Their Home Region	99	92	99	>99	96	99	>99	95	99	98
Percentage of Students Attending a Center in Their Home State	52	91	63	45	55	80	67	86	59	64
Percentage of Students Attending										
First or second closest center to their home	87	39	43	36	51	67	60	77	38	52
Third, fourth, or fifth closest center to their home	2	39	24	17	22	18	19	11	29	21
Sixth closest or more distant center from their home	11	22	33	47	27	15	21	12	33	27

SOURCE: Tabulated for National Job Corps study sample members who enrolled in Job Corps. Distance is measured between the center of the postal zip code in which the individual resided at baseline and the center of the postal zip code in which the Job Corps center he or she attended is located.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJNY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.11

MATERIALS USED TO INFORM APPLICANTS ABOUT CENTERS AND APPROACHES TO MANAGING EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO CENTER ASSIGNMENT, BY REGION

(Percentage of Applicants Screened by an OA Counselor Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Show Videotapes of Centers										
Usually	20	50	40	57	65	23	45	38	31	44
Sometimes	27	3	15	23	14	40	19	18	55	23
Show Pictures of Centers										
Usually	56	32	76	43	37	55	51	22	3	46
Sometimes	9	31	13	21	32	27	26	40	37	25
Provide Written Material About Centers										
Usually	93	100	94	87	76	96	99	90	97	92
Sometimes	0	0	4	8	21	3	1	2	0	5
Counselor Response to Center Preference										
Tell applicant to be open-minded	100	53	57	47	50	63	67	72	34	58
Attempt to satisfy preference	0	45	40	50	39	36	33	28	66	40

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.12

OA COUNSELORS' CONTACTS WITH APPLICANTS BETWEEN CENTER ASSIGNMENT AND ARRIVAL AT CENTER, BY REGION

(Percentage of Applicants Screened by OA Counselors Who Perform the Indicated Activity)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Initiate Contact with Eligible Applicants Awaiting Center Assignment	98	100	81	78	79	85	76	47	52	78
Conduct Interview at Time of Center Assignment	86	93	86	96	98	95	93	80	100	93
Review Eligibility at Time of Center Assignment	42	85	29	77	77	67	51	57	43	61
Review Involvement with Criminal Justice System at Time of Center Assignment	42	76	29	76	67	63	44	54	35	57
Review Health History/Drug Use at Time of Center Assignment	42	57	29	76	77	60	46	57	35	57
Review Capability and Aspirations at Time of Center Assignment	42	66	29	71	77	62	41	51	36	55
Contact Prior to Departure	93	92	99	98	99	95	93	94	100	96
Escort Applicant to Point of Departure	39	58	64	96	80	79	76	27	62	72
Contact After Arrival at Center	43	69	23	57	72	49	81	51	85	57
Try to Contact No-Shows	100	100	100	99	99	98	100	72	100	97

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, Region 2: NJ, NY, Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV, Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI, Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX, Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY, Region 9: AZ, CA, NV, and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.13

PRACTICES IN REFERRING INELIGIBLE JOB CORPS APPLICANTS AND AGENCIES TO WHICH THEY ARE REFERRED, BY REGION

(Percentage of Applicants Screened by a Counselor Who Uses the Indicated Practice)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10	Total
Usually Refer Applicants Who Are Not Able to Enter Job Corps to Other Service Provider	100	100	100	97	92	98	96	100	100	98
Usually Refer Only by Providing a List of Service Providers	34	0	17	14	14	40	15	11	22	18
Usually Refer by Matching to a Specific Service Provider	66	100	83	82	78	58	81	89	78	79

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.15

CENTER DIRECTORS' REPORTS ON OA COUNSELORS' VISITS TO CENTERS AND TYPES OF INFORMATION PROVIDED TO OA COUNSELOR, BY REGION

(Entries Are Percentage of Centers)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10
Contract Centers									
OA Counselor Visits to Centers:									
Most have visited	25	67	50	14	63	50	71	56	10
Some have visited	75	22	50	79	38	50	29	44	60
None have visited	0	11	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Types of Information Provided:									
Video	50	67	70	93	22	50	100	67	80
Brochure	75	78	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Vocational waiting lists	25	67	20	20	44	33	57	78	80
Other material (pictures)	75	56	70	80	56	83	86	89	60
No information provided	25	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CCCs									
OA Counselor Visits to Centers:									
Most have visited	--	0	0	0	0	0	71	--	14
Some have visited	--	100	100	71	100	100	29	--	86
None have visited	--	0	0	29	0	0	0	--	0
Types of Information Provided:									
Video	--	0	100	100	0	33	100	--	86
Brochure	--	50	100	100	50	67	100	--	100
Vocational waiting lists	--	50	0	14	50	0	29	--	71
Other material (pictures)	--	0	0	29	50	33	43	--	14
No information provided	--	50	0	0	50	0	0	--	0

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Job Corps Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.16

CENTER DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT OA COUNSELORS' KNOWLEDGE OF JOB CORPS AND OF THEIR CENTER'S PROGRAM, BY REGION

(Percentage of Centers)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Regions 7/8	Region 9	Region 10
Contract Centers									
How Well OA Staff Are Informed About the Job Corps Program									
Very well informed	100	67	40	40	50	75	86	89	60
Somewhat informed	0	22	60	53	50	25	14	11	40
Not very well informed	0	11	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
How Well OA Staff Are Informed About the Program Specifically Offered by the Center									
Very well informed	50	67	40	7	50	58	71	86	60
Somewhat informed	50	11	60	80	50	42	29	33	40
Not very well informed	0	22	0	13	0	0	0	11	0
Contract Centers									
How Well OA Staff Are Informed About the Job Corps Program									
Very well informed	--	50	50	43	100	0	29	--	57
Somewhat informed	--	50	50	57	0	67	71	--	43
Not very well informed	--	0	0	0	0	33	0	--	0
How Well OA Staff Are Informed About the Program Specifically Offered by the Center									
Very well informed	--	50	0	29	0	33	57	--	29
Somewhat informed	--	50	100	71	100	67	29	--	71
Not very well informed	--	0	0	0	0	0	14	--	0

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Job Corps Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.17

JOB CORPS RELEVANT OCCUPATIONAL TITLES WITH LARGEST PROJECTED AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF JOB OPENINGS

Occupational Title	Average Annual Number of Job Openings
Salespersons, Retail	165,560
Cashiers	161,060
Waiters & Waitresses	126,390
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	103,630
General Office Clerks	82,530
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	79,180
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	71,600
Truck Drivers Light & Heavy	63,740
Clerical Supervisors	55,730
Guards	52,730
Nursing Aides & Orderlies	51,490
Receptionists & Information Clerks	46,140
Maintenance Repairers, General Utilities	46,140
Home Health Aides	44,340
Teacher Aides & Education Assistants	43,660
Blue-Collar Worker Supervisors	43,650
Food Counter, Fountain & Related	42,130
Stock Clerks	40,260
Hand Packers & Packagers	38,980
Bookkeeping, Accounting, Audit Clerks	36,360
Automotive Mechanics	31,550
Licensed Practical Nurses	30,980
Child Care Workers	29,210
Food Service & Lodging Managers	28,480
Freight, Stock & Material Movers	27,860
Cooks, Restaurant	27,020
Cooks, Short Order & Fast Food	26,990

TABLE B.[illegible] *(continued)*

Occupational Title	Average Annual Number of Job Openings
Carpenters	26,350
Food Preparation Workers	25,590
Police Patrol Officers	24,630
Farm Workers	23,910
Personal & Home Care Aides	23,590
Bank Tellers	22,190
Helpers, Construction Trades	21,820
Hairdressers, Hairstylists	21,190
Computer Programmers	20,690
Farmers	19,200
Amusement & Recreation Attendants	19,170
Counter & Rental Clerks	18,470
Correction Officers	17,620
Adjustment Clerks	15,930
Painters & Paperhangers	15,810
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	15,720
Human Services Workers	15,450
Dining Room & Cafeteria Helpers	14,300
Medical Assistants	14,100
Electricians	13,810
Traffic, Shipping & Receiving Clerks	13,630
Child Care Workers, Private	12,660
Bartenders	12,540

SOURCE: Tabulations of data from ALMIS

TABLE B.18

OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, BY JOB CORPS REGION

Occupational Title	Average Annual Number of Job Openings
Region 1	
Salespersons, Retail	9,080
Cashiers	8,630
Waiters & Waitresses	7,510
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	5,120
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	4,030
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	3,700
General Office Clerks	3,390
Trans & Material Moving Machine Operators	3,310
Clerical Supervisors	3,240
Nursing Aides & Orderlies	3,180
Region 2	
Cashiers	20,081
Salespersons, Retail	19,732
Waiters & Waitresses	12,455
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	9,070
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	9,048
General Office Clerks	8,563
Guards	7,526
Clerical Supervisors	7,061
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	6,980
Home Health Aides	5,340
Region 3	
Cashiers	18,060
Salespersons, Retail	16,260
Waiters & Waitresses	12,530
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	10,310
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	8,150
General Office Clerks	7,420
Trans & Material Moving Machine Operators	6,200
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	6,080
Food Counter, Fountain & Related	5,780
Clerical Supervisors	5,730
Region 4	
Cashiers	43,120
Salespersons, Retail	34,720
Waiters & Waitresses	28,190
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	22,470
General Office Clerks	19,520
Trans & Material Moving Machine Operators	18,900
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	17,310
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	16,090
Blue-Collar Worker Supervisors	12,560
Nursing Aides & Orderlies	12,360

TABLE B.18 *(continued)*

Occupational Title	Average Annual Number of Job Openings
Region 5	
Cashiers	32.787
Salespersons, Retail	31.137
Waiters & Waitresses	27.297
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	16.803
General Office Clerks	15.683
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	13.520
Trans & Material Moving Machine Operators	12.590
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	12.280
Nursing Aides & Orderlies	9.810
Maintenance Repairers, Gen Util	9.610
Region 6	
Salespersons, Retail	20,875
Cashiers	20.700
General Office Clerks	13.450
Waiters & Waitresses	13.370
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	8.855
Food Preparation Workers	8.855
Nursing Aides & Orderlies	7.680
Clerical Supervisors	7.025
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	6.970
Child Care Workers	6.950
Region 7	
Salespersons, Retail	7.810
Cashiers	6.600
Trans & Material Moving Machine Operators	5.540
Waiters & Waitresses	5.460
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	5.140
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	4.050
General Office Clerks	3.980
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	3.950
Food Counter, Fountain & Related	3.280
Blue-Collar Worker Supervisors	3.190
Region 8	
Salespersons, Retail	8.440
Waiters & Waitresses	6.820
Cashiers	6.230
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	5.780
Trans & Material Moving Machine Operators	4.140
General Office Clerks	3.860
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	3.770
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	3.270
Food Counter, Fountain & Related	2.970
Clerical Supervisors	2.580

TABLE B.18 *(continued)*

Occupational Title	Average Annual Number of Job Openings
Region 9	
Salespersons, Retail	30,960
Waiters & Waitresses	27,780
Cashiers	23,490
General Office Clerks	19,460
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	17,140
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	13,380
Trans & Material Moving Machine Operators	13,360
Clerical Supervisors	11,990
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	11,170
Food Counter, Fountain & Related	10,820
Region 10	
Salespersons, Retail	8,640
Waiters & Waitresses	6,600
Cashiers	6,400
Trans & Material Moving Machine Operators	4,290
General Office Clerks	4,230
Janitors & Cleaners, Including Maid	3,890
Food Counter, Fountain & Related	3,200
Marketing & Sales, Supervisors	3,150
Clerical Supervisors	2,960
Secretaries, Except Legal & Medical	2,700

SOURCE: Tabulations of data from ALMIS.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.19

AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF JOB OPENINGS AND NUMBER OF TRAINING SLOTS FOR 10 LARGEST VOCATIONAL TRADE OFFERINGS, BY JOB CORPS REGION

Vocational Training Area	Training Slots	Average Annual Number of Job Openings
Region 1		
Clerical Occupations	390	13,150
Health Occupations	186	6,800
Food Service	136	12,310
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	120	7,200
Painter	84	1,480
Welding	68	350
Carpentry	64	1,430
Mechanic	60	2,920
Electrician Trainee	48	1,420
Forestry/Landscaping	48	1,070
Region 2		
Clerical Occupations	671	25,933
Health Occupations	430	8,130
Mechanic	236	2,559
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	228	15,136
Masonry	210	540
Food Service	188	19,505
Carpentry	168	760
Electrician Trainee	151	720
Salesperson	99	43,343
Painter	88	670
Region 3		
Clerical Occupations	860	27,540
Health Occupations	621	10,230
Masonry	416	3,010
Carpentry	360	2,790
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	306	14,570
Food Service	205	22,800
Painter	166	3,650
Electrician Trainee	144	3,670
Salesperson	130	38,370
Plumber	120	3,000
Region 4		
Clerical Occupations	1,196	59,770
Masonry	784	7,550
Health Occupations	735	2,4010
Carpentry	732	5,830
Food Service	628	57,290
Welding	624	2,950
Mechanic	608	13,400
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	584	32,540
Painter	352	9,040
Electrician Trainee	264	9,270

TABLE B.19 *(continued)*

Vocational Training Area	Training Slots	Average Annual Number of Job Openings
Region 5		
Clerical Occupations	635	49,056
Health Occupations	394	19,260
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	336	26,413
Carpentry	252	4,950
Food Service	200	47,624
Painter	192	4,730
Welding	168	2,960
Masonry	128	3,760
Computer Operator	125	1,190
Mechanic	106	10,390
Region 6		
Clerical Occupations	1,223	35,695
Health Occupations	852	15,755
Carpentry	486	1,420
Welding	482	1,100
Food Service	402	26,345
Electrician Trainee	399	2,130
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	384	14,840
Mechanic	368	3,160
Masonry	352	1,890
Painter	192	2,600
Region 7		
Clerical Occupations	458	14,360
Health Occupations	366	5,230
Masonry	204	1,240
Carpentry	200	1,740
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	168	7,420
Food Service	152	11,510
Welding	144	1,010
Painter	100	1,460
Salesperson	100	16,910
Security Officer	28	2,330
Region 8		
Clerical Occupations	510	13,260
Mechanic	372	2,790
Carpentry	320	1,710
Welding	288	570
Health Occupations	280	3,200
Food Service	204	13,060
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	192	7,640
Masonry	152	1,620
Painter	120	1,700
Forestry/Landscaping	98	1,240

TABLE B.19 *(continued)*

Vocational Training Area	Training Slots	Average Annual Number of Job Openings
Region 9		
Clerical Occupations	1022	57,030
Health Occupations	424	12,880
Computer Support Specialist	319	2,210
Masonry	318	8,340
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	289	25,930
Food Service	174	54,120
Mechanic	168	10,040
Carpentry	166	7,410
Computer Operator	140	1,420
Forestry/Landscaping	127	6,590
Region 10		
Clerical Occupations	470	12,900
Carpentry	420	2,290
Health Occupations	354	3,830
Masonry	324	1,070
Food Service	280	13,720
Painter	220	1,520
Welding	216	740
Bldg. & Apt. Maint. Repair	168	5,900
Forestry/Landscaping	144	2,130
Mechanic	132	3,340

SOURCE: Data on training slots are from National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey. Data on average annual number of job openings are from ALMIS.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.20

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TRADES SELECTED BY 1996 TERMINEES, BY REGION
(Percentage of Students)

	No Trade Selected		1 Trade Selected		2 Trades Selected		3 Trades Selected	
By Region	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
1	19	NA	64	NA	17	NA	0	NA
2	17	25	68	64	15	12	0	0
3	19	26	66	64	15	10	0	0
4	14	22	66	67	20	12	0	0
5	20	21	62	70	18	10	0	0
6	15	31	62	65	23	5	0	0
7/8	14	13	66	67	19	20	1	0
9	19	NA	60	NA	20	NA	1	NA
10	12	13	68	70	21	17	1	0

SOURCE: Tabulations from Job Corps SPAMIS.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.21

DURATION OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPLORATION PROGRAM
(Percentage of Centers)

	Number of Days					
	7 or Less		8 to 14		More than 14	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	15		73		13	
Contract/CCC	13	20	75	67	13	13
By Region						
1	0	none	100	none	0	none
2	11	0	67	100	22	0
3	0	100	90	100	10	0
4	13	29	73	71	13	0
5	33	0	67	100	0	0
6	8	0	75	67	17	33
7/8	14	29	71	57	14	33
9	11	none	67	none	22	none
10	20	0	80	71	0	29
Residential Status						
Primarily residential	9	20	76	67	15	13
Significantly Nonresidential	19	none	73	none	8	none
By Location						
Inner city	11	none	78	none	11	none
Urban	19	0	67	100	15	0
Suburban	10	14	81	86	10	0
Rural	0	24	75	57	25	19

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.22

NUMBER OF TRADES EXPLORED AND HOURS OF HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE DURING OEP

	Number of Trades Explored						Number of Hours of Hands-On Experience Per Trade Explored					
	1 to 2		3		4 or More		Less than 4		4 to 6		6 or More	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	9		64		27		19		17		10	
Contract/CCC	10	7	60	73	30	20	24	3	18	13	10	10
By Region												
1	25	none	25	none	50	none	25	none	0	none	50	none
2	11	0	56	100	33	0	11	0	22	100	11	0
3	0	0	60	50	40	50	20	0	30	0	10	50
4	7	0	53	71	40	29	20	0	20	0	13	14
5	25	0	50	50	25	50	38	50	13	0	0	0
6	0	33	64	67	36	0	36	0	9	33	0	0
7/8	0	0	86	86	14	14	29	0	0	0	14	14
9	11	none	78	none	11	none	11	none	33	none	0	none
10	40	14	60	71	0	14	40	0	20	14	20	0
By Residential Status												
Primarily residential	9.3	6.7	66.7	73.3	24.1	20	27.8	3.3	14.8	13.3	13.0	10.0
Significantly nonresidential	12.5	none	45.8	none	41.7	none	16.7	none	25.0	none	4.2	none
By Location												
Inner city	13	none	69	none	19	none	31	none	25	none	0	none
Urban	11	0	49	100	41	0	19	0	22	50	4	0
Suburban	10	0	62	86	29	14	26	0	10	29	23	0
Rural	0	10	100	0.7	0	24	25	5	25	5	0	14

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.23

STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDENT SELECTION OF TRADES TO EXPLORE IN OEP AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING ASSIGNMENT

(Percentage of Contract/CCC Centers)

	Process of Selecting Trades to Explore in OEP				Process for Selecting Vocational Training Assignment				If Staff Feel Student Won't Do Well, Advise Another Trade		Students Allowed to Enter Whatever Trade They Wish	
	Staff Primarily Guide Students		Students Primarily Select Trades		Staff Primarily Guide Students		Students Primarily Select Trades		Staff Primarily Guide Students		Students Primarily Select Trades	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	20		79		43		58		92		80	
Contract/CCC	21	17	78	83	48	30	53	70	94	87	79	83
By Region												
1	25	none	75	none	25	none	75	none	100	none	50	none
2	22	0	78	100	56	0	44	100	100	50	67	100
3	10	0	90	100	40	0	60	100	100	50	80	0
4	40	29	53	71	47	57	53	43	80	86	73	100
5	33	100	67	0	44	100	56	0	89	100	78	0
6	17	33	83	67	58	33	42	67	100	100	83	100
7/8	14	0	86	100	71	29	29	71	100	86	86	86
9	11	none	89	none	44	none	56	none	100	none	89	none
10	0	0	100	100	20	0	80	100	80	100	100	100
By Residential Status												
Primarily residential	17	17	83	83	46	30	54	70	94	87	76	83
Significantly nonresidential	31	none	65	none	50	none	50	none	92	none	85	none
By Location												
Inner city	28	none	72	none	50	none	50	none	100	none	78	none
Urban	26	0	70	100	52	0	48	100	93	50	74	100
Suburban	13	14	87	86	45	43	55	57	90	86	84	71
Rural	25	19	75	81	25	29	75	71	100	91	75	86

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.24

YEARS OF STAFF EXPERIENCE
(Mean Percentage)

	Mean Percentage of Staff with (Years of Experience)									
	Less than 1		1 to 2		3 to 6		7 to 10		10 or More	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	24		22		27		12		16	
By Center Type										
CCC	13		16		30		15		26	
Primarily residential	32		24		23		10		11	
Significantly nonresidential	21		23		29		12		15	
By Region										
1	48	--	24	--	18	--	5	--	6	--
2	30	19	23	25	29	34	12	16	7	6
3	29	15	23	12	28	32	9	8	10	32
4	24	13	20	15	26	31	13	17	17	24
5	40	11	29	20	17	25	8	19	6	25
6	32	12	23	17	22	26	8	14	16	31
7/8	23	11	26	13	27	31	12	16	12	29
9	18	--	22	--	31	--	14	--	15	--
10	24	13	34	18	26	30	9	15	7	25
By Location										
Inner city	28	--	22	--	26	--	12	--	11	--
Urban	31	25	27	16	23	36	9	6	11	17
Suburban	28	11	22	16	27	25	11	18	12	29
Rural	17	12	24	16	23	31	17	16	20	25

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.25

PERCENTAGE OF CENTERS WITH STAFF VACANCIES, BY REGION, LOCATION, AND POSITION TYPE

	All Staff		Senior Management		Other Management		Vocational Instructors		Academic Instructors		Counselors		Residential Advisors		Other	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	99		73		64		79		77		74		90		99	
By Center Type																
CCC	97		67		10		70		60		40		83		97	
Primarily residential	100		76		85		87		83		87		100		100	
Significantly nonresidential	100		73		81		73		85		85		77		100	
By Region																
1	100	--	100	--	100	--	100	--	50	--	100	--	100	--	100	--
2	100	100	78	50	89	50	78	100	67	100	89	0	78	50	100	100
3	100	100	90	100	90	0	90	100	90	50	100	50	90	100	100	100
4	100	100	80	86	93	0	73	57	87	71	87	43	100	100	100	100
5	100	100	89	50	78	0	89	50	100	50	78	50	89	100	100	100
6	100	100	67	67	83	0	83	67	100	100	75	33	92	67	100	100
7/8	100	86	57	71	86	14	100	57	86	29	86	57	100	86	100	86
9	100	--	56	--	67	--	78	--	78	--	100	--	100	--	100	--
10	100	100	60	43	60	14	60	86	60	57	60	29	80	71	100	100
By Location																
Inner city	100	--	83	--	78	--	89	--	78	--	89	--	83	--	100	--
Urban	100	100	67	100	85	50	70	100	85	50	85	50	93	100	100	100
Suburban	100	86	77	71	87	14	87	71	87	71	87	57	97	57	100	86
Rural	100	100	75	62	5	100	67	75	57	75	33	100	91	100	100	100

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.26

COMPARISON OF STAFF AND STUDENT COMPOSITION, BY REGION
(Mean Index of Dissimilarity)

	Gender		Race		Gender and Race	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	12		27		32	
By Center Type						
CCC	16		27		34	
Primarily residential	11		26		32	
Significantly nonresidential	10		28		32	
By Region						
1	5	--	20	--	21	--
2	5	14	65	42	67	45
3	14	15	27	31	32	32
4	17	18	12	35	24	39
5	12	17	18	39	24	39
6	8	18	23	24	26	32
7/8	10	11	26	24	30	29
9	6	--	29	--	32	--
10	12	18	28	14	30	29
By Location						
Inner city	6.9	--	17.4	--	21.8	--
Urban	9.3	5.2	22.9	27.5	28.0	27.9
Suburban	13.9	12.5	32.0	28.9	38.2	31.5
Rural	9.9	17.9	52.3	26.4	52.3	34.8

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.27

PERCENTAGE OF CENTERS THAT PROVIDE OMS INFORMATION TO STAFF AND STUDENTS

	Frequency of Providing OMS Information to Management Staff				Frequency of Providing OMS Information to Other Center Staff					
	Weekly		Monthly		Weekly		Monthly		Whether Provide Information to Students	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	67		33		38		60		68	
By Center Type										
CCC	37		63		20		80		63	
Primarily residential	80		20		44		56		70	
Significantly nonresidential	77		23		46		46		69	
By Region										
1	100	--	0	--	25	--	75	--	50	--
2	56	50	44	50	33	0	67	100	100	100
3	70	50	30	50	40	50	60	50	70	50
4	93	43	7	57	47	29	53	71	87	71
5	78	0	22	100	63	0	38	100	56	0
6	83	0	17	100	33	0	67	100	83	67
7/8	100	43	0	57	71	14	29	86	43	57
9	67	--	33	--	44	--	44	--	44	--
10	60	43	4	57	60	29	40	71	60	71

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.28

USE OF INCENTIVES OR BONUSES FOR VARIOUS STAFF

	Director Eligible for Payment Based on Performance		Staff Eligible for Payment Based on Performance		OMS Performance Used in Staff Appraisals	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	61		51		86	
By Center Type						
CCC	10		17		83	
Primarily residential	82		69		87	
Significantly nonresidential	77		54		89	
By Region						
1	75	--	75	--	75	--
2	78	0	78	0	67	50
3	100	0	60	0	100	50
4	93	0	60	29	93	100
5	67	0	67	0	100	50
6	50	0	58	0	75	100
7/8	86	43	57	43	100	100
9	78	--	78	--	78	--
10	100	0	40	0	100	71

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: The states included in the study, by region, are as follows: Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Region 2: NJ, NY; Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, DC, WV; Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN; Region 5: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI; Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX; Regions 7/8: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY; Region 9: AZ, CA, NV; and Region 10: ID, OR, WA.

TABLE B.29

PERCENTAGE OF CENTERS THAT USE OMS INFORMATION AS INPUT TO VARIOUS DECISIONS

	OMS Data Used for Management Decisions		OMS Data Used in Student Retention Decisions	
	Contract	CCC	Contract	CCC
Overall	89		33	
By Center Type				
CCC	87		33	
Primarily residential	89		26	
Significantly nonresidential	92		46	
By Region				
1	100	--	0	--
2	100	100	11	0
3	90	100	30	100
4	93	100	27	57
5	100	100	67	50
6	83	67	50	0
7/8	100	86	43	14
9	78	--	22	--
10	60	71	20	29

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